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★ **THE ULTIMATE MUSIC MAGAZINE**

PINK

**LOOK OUT, >>>>
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THE B*TCH
IS BACK!**

**PAGING
DR. FREUD
ROCK STARS
PSYCHOANALYZED!**



**THE
STROKES**
**NEW ALBUM:
THE VERDICT**



**JEEZ! GET A
ROOM!**

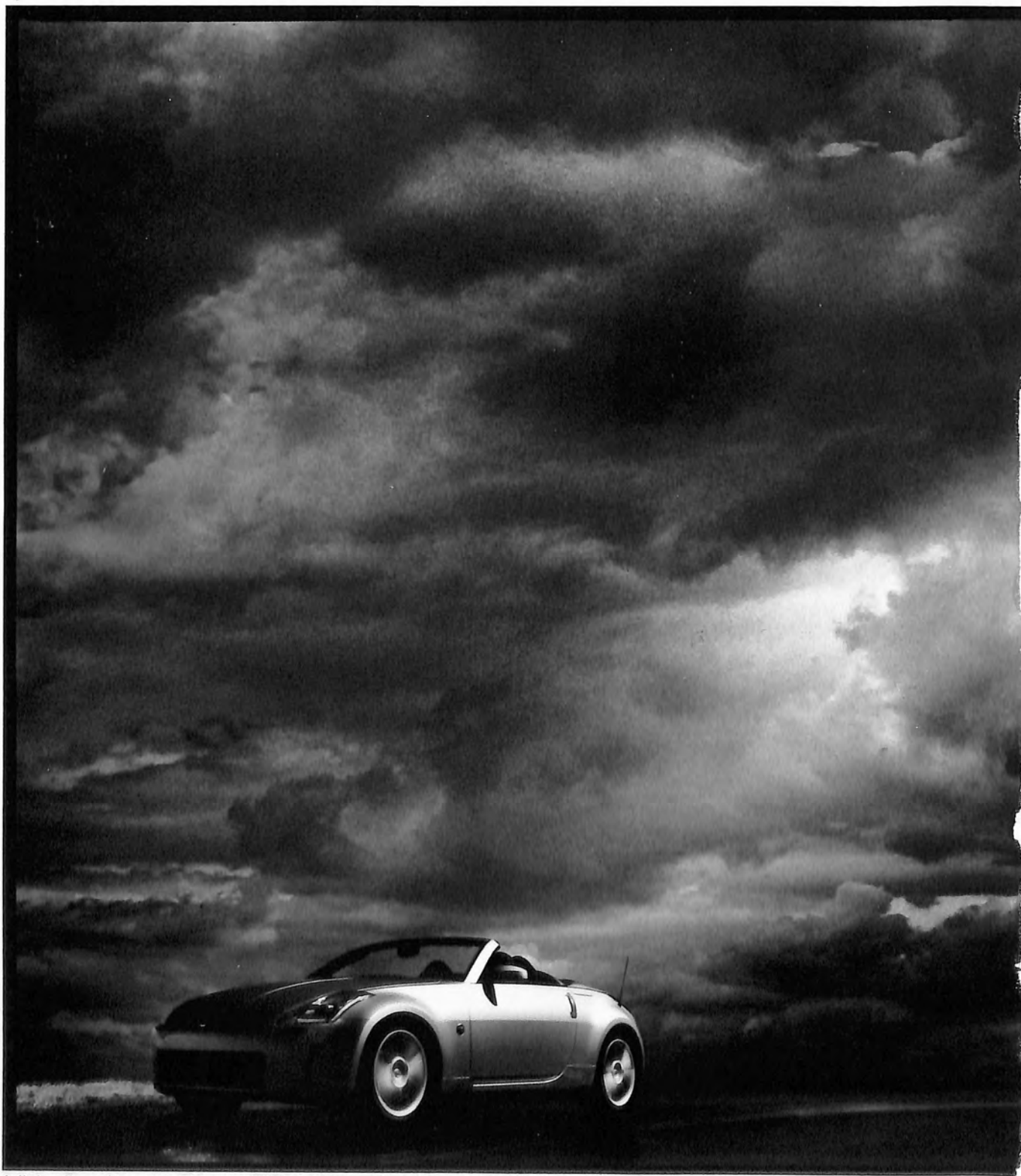
>>>> **IT'S THE**

**50
HOTTEST
ROCK
COUPLES
EVER!**

★
**JOHNNY
CASH**
1932-2003

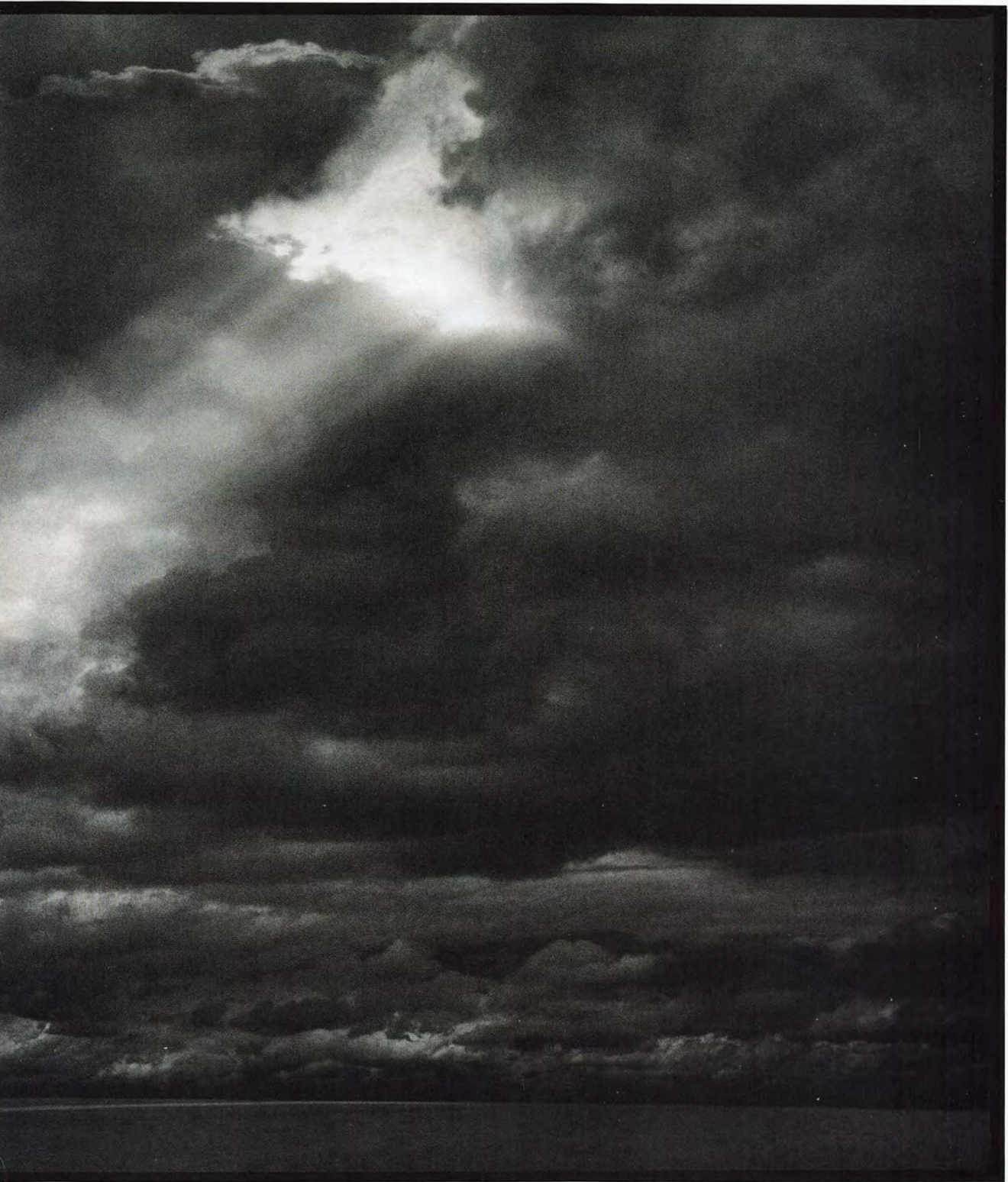
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MANDY
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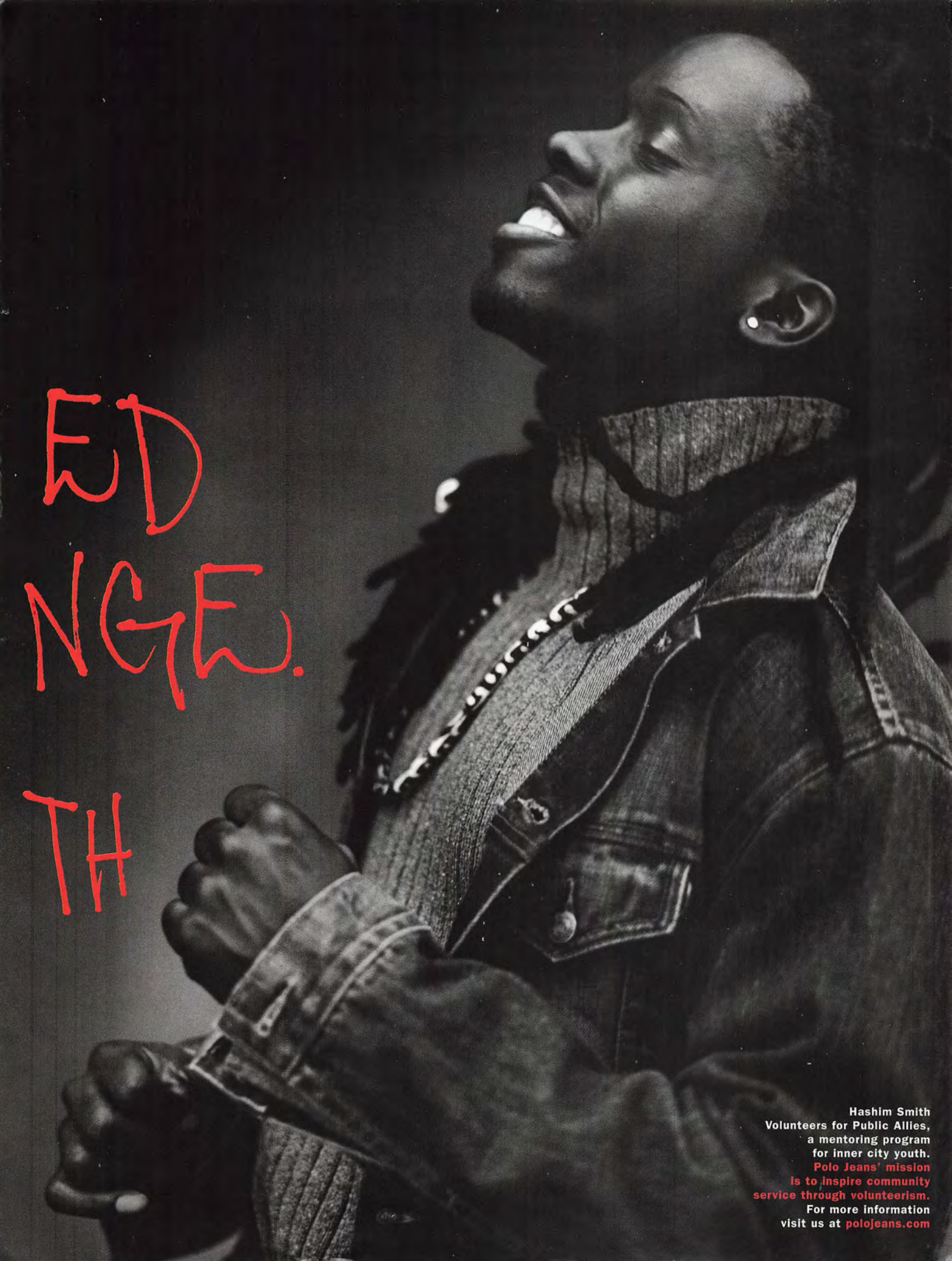
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JAK II



THIS WORLD IS
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It ain't no namby pamby fairyland, pal. It's a whole new kind of evil. Crawling with ruthless dictators, backstabbing allies and blood thirsty freaks with an appetite for extra rare meat. All pansies kindly tippy toe on out of here. This requires someone with serious ass-kicking savvy. And that someone, my friend, is Jak. This time he's pissed off and battle ready, with a frighteningly large gun, get-the-hell-outta-my-way hoverboard and a nasty case of mutant powers. So please, save yourself the detached appendages and let him handle it.



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ATHERS



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NORELCO



D-FINER



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Line

Any

Shape



"Shark"



"Procrastinator"



FEATURES >>

66 MANDY MOORE

The PG princess discusses her crappy bowling, her new album of covers and why, if you bought her first CD, she's got \$15.99 to refund you. Plus: Her film oeuvre reviewed by *Blender's* own Fat Dad™!

70 ROCK STAR SELF-PORTRAITS

For this month's science project, *Blender* asked Wayne Coyne, Alanis Morissette and a waiting room full of stars to draw themselves. A leading shrink analyzes their disturbing results. Let's get Freudian!

74 JOHNNY CASH: 1932-2003

Attacked by an ostrich, arrested seven times, addicted to speed, creator of some of country's greatest records: The incredible life of the Man in Black remembered.

78 THE 50 HOTTEST ROCK COUPLES OF ALL TIME

Is it Justin and Britney? Justin and Cameron? Mick and Marianne? Or Winona and that guy with the hair from *Soul Asylum*? Which one of music's star-crossed pairings is the hottest — and why?

88 \$848: ALIEN ANT FARM

Blender gave nü-metallers Alien Ant Farm \$848 in euros. They spent it getting really drunk. Then they insulted a gang of burly Frenchmen — who kicked the crap out of them. *Touché!*

90 33 THINGS ABOUT R.E.M.

They almost named themselves *Negro Wives*. Bill Berry owes Mike Mills \$475,000. Michael Stipe once had a haircut like *Friar Tuck's*. And 30 other startling factoids!

96 PINK

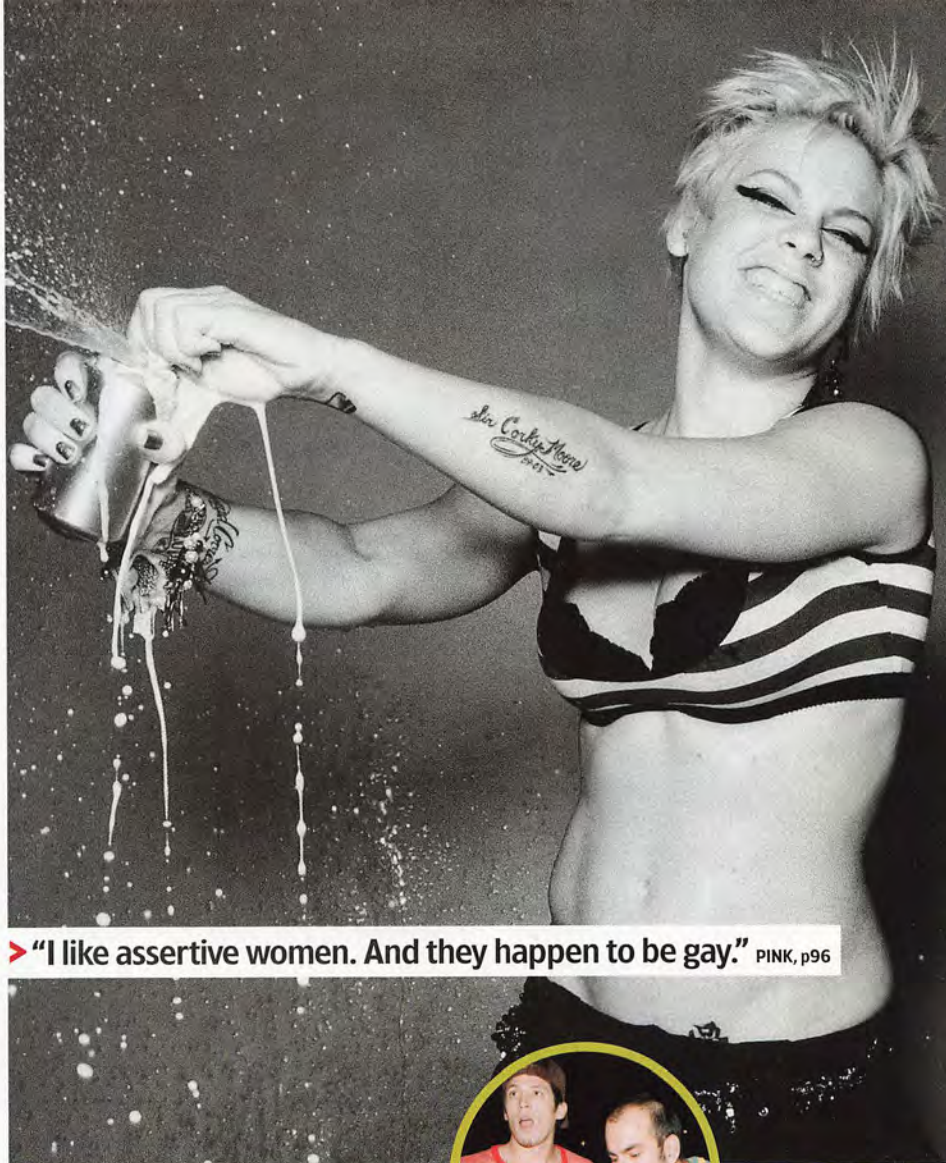
She's *baaack!* After selling 8 million albums, Pink is done being the R&B underdog. She wrote her punky new album, *Try This*, with the lead singer of *Rancid*. "People know I'm not Barbie," declares the anti-Britney. "And I'm all right with that."

ON THE COVER >>>>

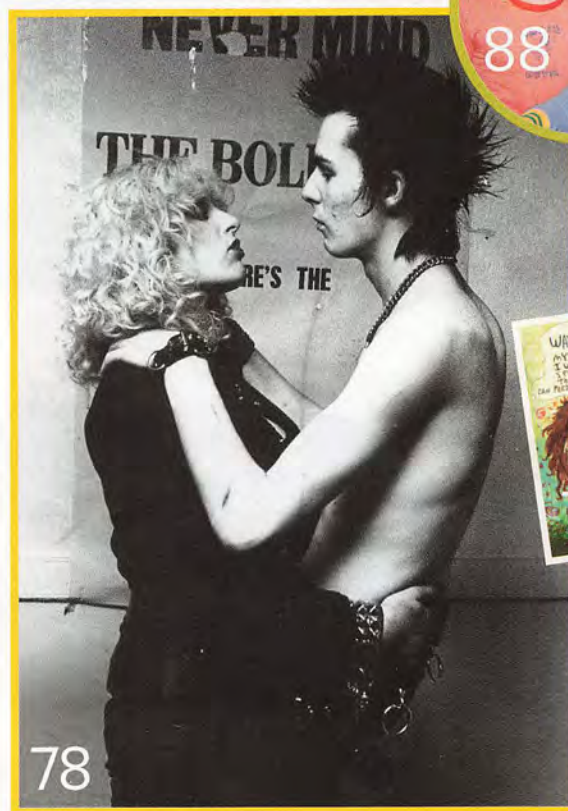
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ARTISTS BY TIMOTHY
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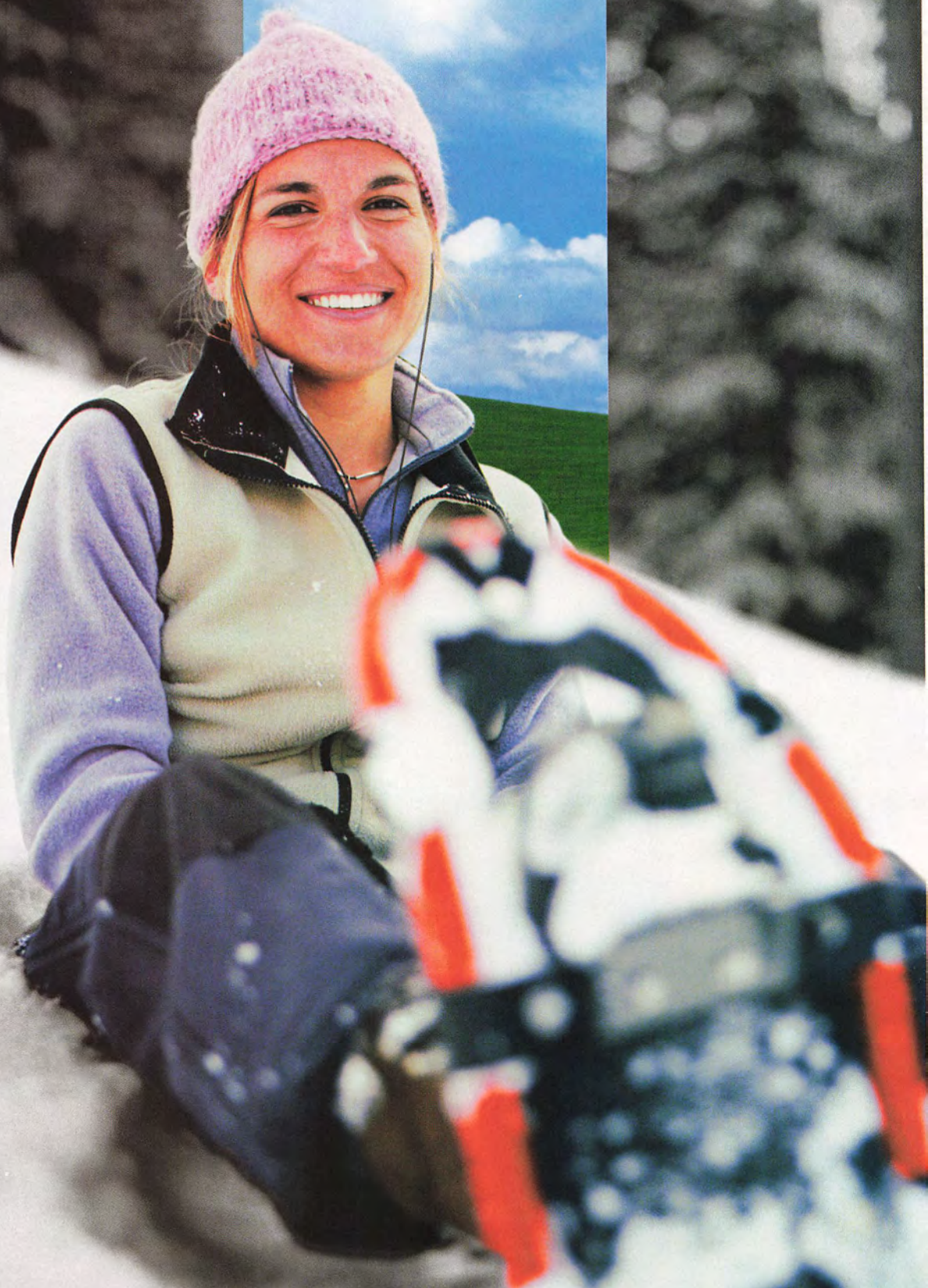
> "I like assertive women. And they happen to be gay." PINK, p96



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MUSIC
YOUR
BEER



student, trailblazer, DJ



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Julie Ellis

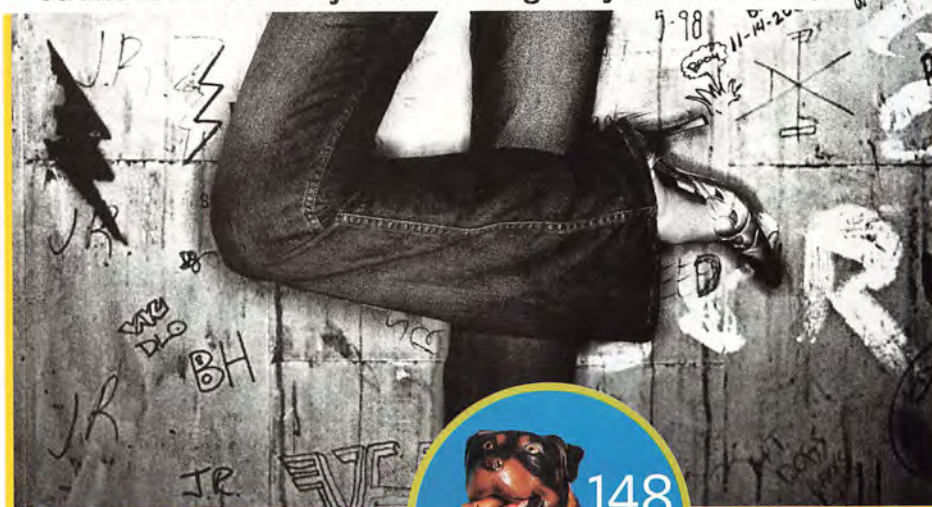
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do Amazing things





> "I'd like to refund everyone who bought my CD." MANDY MOORE, p66



REGULARS >>

22 EDITOR'S LETTER

24 LETTERS

32 BURNER

Lots of celebrities indulge their alcoholic tendencies at *Blender*'s fantastic post-VMA party; Britney indulges her Sapphic tendencies; Madonna indulges her childish tendencies — and much more!

38 THE NEXT BIG THING!

Thursday, Elephant Man

56 DEAR SUPERSTAR

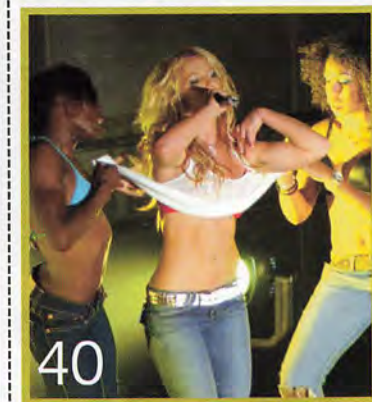
Hey, Method Man: Will there ever be an openly gay gangsta rapper? What's the most weed you've ever smoked at once? And does Whoopi Goldberg know that you'd like to get her in the sack?

62 THE GREATEST SONGS EVER!

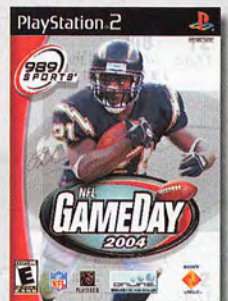
In between championship drinking bouts and shedding band members, Robert Smith managed to write what he calls "the best pop song the Cure have ever done": the classic "Just Like Heaven."

64 ASK BLENDER

The attempted assassination of Paul McCartney; Prince's secret messages; emo feuds; Guns N' Roses in Hollywood; and a hell of a lot more!



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THE GUIDE >>

106 NEW RELEASES

The Strokes, the Distillers, Outkast, dead prez, the Darkness and more!

124 CHART

126 MY MUSIC

Fans of intense *Fight Club* author Chuck Palahniuk, brace yourselves: He's a Toni Braxton nut!

128 REISSUES

A punk box set, R.E.M., Steve Miller, Culture Club, Motörhead and more!

136 BACK CATALOG

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138 LIVE!

Duran Duran; Damien Rice

140 MOVIES

142 BOOKS

144 GAMES

146 CROSSWORD

148 WHO DOES TRIUMPH THE INSULT COMIC DOG THINK HE IS?

Blender asked everybody's favorite cigar-chomping canine hand puppet a lot of serious questions... for him to poop on!



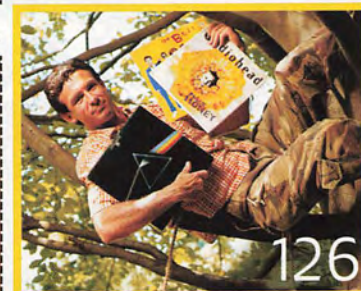
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128



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126

> His talent is for turning ordinary lives into poetry. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, p136

Private First Class. **Tamer Seoud**. 68B Aircraft Powerplant Repair.

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CRAZY IN THE COCONUT!

» WHAT MAKES pop stars tick? Why is Brian Wilson the way he is? Does Courtney Love dream of electric sheep? What's Michael Jackson's problem? Is ODB happy with himself — or with anyone else, for that matter?

Of course, every issue of *Blender* is devoted to this quest for knowledge. But finding the answers usually involves all sorts of trouble: things like "interviewing" and "writing" and stuff like that. So this issue, we thought we'd make it easy: We got some stars to sketch themselves — then we persuaded a head doctor to analyze the drawings.

And what did we discover? Pop stars are a bunch of screaming freaks, that's what!

Mother issues, father issues, uncle issues, issue issues — you really wouldn't believe the nonsense rattling around their fevered brains.

To check that our shrink knew her stuff, I sketched myself too and showed it to her. I don't know what "grandiose delusions" are, but they sound terrific.

Enjoy the issue, plebs!

ANDY PEMBERTON
EDITOR
IN CHIEF

» Pop stars are a bunch of screaming freaks!



"Borderline personality? Me? Nooo. Munch... munch..."

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You've Got Mail!

WE WANT YOU TO SHARE...



SPINE MESSAGE!

Thanks for the subtle tribute to the recently deceased Sam Phillips on the spine of your October issue, where you printed the lyric "That gal you're foolin' with/She ain't no good for you." It's from the song "That's All Right Mama," which was made famous by Elvis Presley — I believe it's the first song the King recorded for Phillips's Sun Records. Do I win a prize?

CHRISTOPHER MICHAELSEN, ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

UPSIDE-DOWN LYRIC

After reading your recent Steve Earle back-page interview ["Who Does Steve Earle Think He Is?", October], I flipped the magazine over to get a better look at the lyric printed down there — "Day in day out all week long/Things go better with rock" — and was suddenly transported back to my junior year of high school. That's from Autograph's classic "Turn Up the Radio." I could almost smell the Aqua Net. Thanks!

SHARON GIAMBI, BAYONNE, NEW JERSEY

I HAVE HAD A HORRIFIC CAR ACCIDENT

In July, I was with a friend, heading toward Detroit in his brand new F-150, when he lost control and we went into the median and across oncoming traffic. We rolled five times (my right arm was rolled over by the truck, so even though I'm right-handed, I now have to type with my left). My friend was knocked unconscious; I was left with many broken bones. He was released, but I'm still in the hospital. All I've done is listen to music and read issues of *Blender* that my friends have brought me. I've been in the hospital for a little

★ Congratulations to the winner of *Blender*'s September Crossword contest, who walks away with a Sims Fader Series snowboard: Sam Muller of St. Cloud, Minnesota. Yeah!

WIN ME!

LISTEN UP! >>

CALLING ALL *BLENDER* readers: We want to hear from you! Write us a letter. Tell us your deepest thoughts and secret desires. . . . Er, well, maybe just your thoughts, then. If we print your letter in our next issue, we'll send you the amazing SlimX 400. iRiver's premier MP3-CD player features playlist management, built-in FM tuner, skip-free music playback, up to 23 hours of play time and MP3, WMA and ASF format support. Wow!

Send your letters to *Letters to the Editor*, *Blender*, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018. Or: your2cents@blender.com. Hell, yes!



Liz Phair: She's taking requests!

over a month now, and I would like to thank you for keeping me sane.

CHARLES MARTINEZ, SMITHSCREEK, MICHIGAN

We're certainly glad that we could be of assistance. And if you've got any spare painkillers . . .

GREATY GREAT!

Your recent feature about the 1,001 Greatest Songs to Download Right Now! [October] was really awesome. When will record companies stop punishing their audience and start realizing the only reason fans download songs is because the industry has shut them out by overpricing CDs and refusing to release singles? People want *songs*. If you won't provide them, they'll get them by other means. Hey, Recording Industry Association of America — you brought this on yourself! Also, Liz Phair looked fantastic on page 91.

GENE THOMPSON, CLEVELAND

YOU MORONS!

Is there any particular reason you people actually insult artists in your record reviews? Adjectives such as *moronic*, a description you recently applied to Ryan Adams's side project, the Finger [New Releases, October], should never be used in any professional review, regardless of how



From left: Clay Aiken, Thom Yorke

EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED

My September *Blender* arrived the other day, and I was excited to see one of today's biggest stars on the cover. I tore it open and was very disappointed to see that the cover article was about Thom Yorke of Radiohead. I was looking forward to getting to know more about *American Idol*'s Clay Aiken.

WAYNE HOLMAN, LIMA, OHIO

bad the album was, or how bad the artist generally is.

KLISK FYRERAIN, PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

We bet you didn't much like our 50 Worst Artists of All Time feature. But we know someone who did. . . .

I HAVE BEEN DRIVEN CRAZY!

Thanks so much for putting Paul Oakenfold at number 35 on your 50

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Bob the Monkey's Dave Matthews mask fooled everyone!

Worst Artists list [September]. The last time he performed near me, radio stations wouldn't stop playing him. It drove me crazy. I mean, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that he sucks.

RITIKA KHLNANI, PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

WHAT A WANKER!

I always thought Dave Matthews was, as the British say, a wanker, but his Dear Superstar feature [October] proved it! "I like to think I'm a recovering onanist." There! He said it!

BENJAMIN WILLIS, DES MOINES, IOWA

He speaks very highly of you, Benjamin.

JESSICA SIMPSON HAS NO CLASS

So Jessica Simpson ["The Girl Next Door," September] feels that her new wedding book is appropriate for "the lower classes"? Why, how charitable of her! Jessica, honey, being "lower class" has nothing to do with how much money you have. I can't think of anything less classy than whoring your life out to MTV in a desperate attempt to stay in the public eye.

JULIE EHLERS, WEST HAZLETON, PENNSYLVANIA

NO CLASS AT ALL...

Perhaps one day I too will have pink icing between my ears, and will make absurdly insensitive comments about America's socioeconomic strata in a national magazine. Jessica Simpson: Can I be you?

ASHLEA HALPERN, PHILADELPHIA

Sorry, Ashlea — that's just impossible.

LETTERS >>

SUPERFAN!

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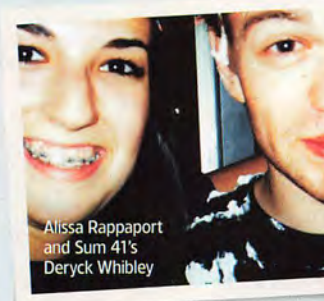
Anthony Hoffman and Vanessa Carlton



Stephanie Hargett and Pharrell Williams



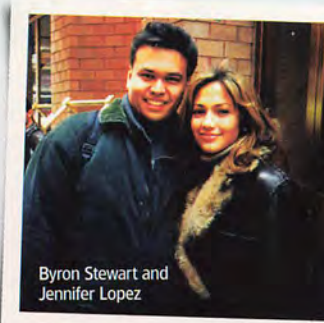
Scott Halford and George Clinton



Alissa Rappaport and Sum 41's Deryck Whibley



Mark Bergamini and Chris Robinson



Byron Stewart and Jennifer Lopez

For her window-cleaning business, Jessica Simpson wore her chamois!



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BUT MARY MAGDALENE DOES!

On page 80 of your September issue, you put Mary Magdalene on your list of "Six More Hot Devout Christians" to compare with Jessica Simpson. Hot, probably, yeah. But you also say she was a prostitute. Probably not. The prostitute myth was made up by Pope

Gregory in the sixth century. I'll grant you her demonic possession, but the whole penitent-whore shtick is wearing thin, especially since even the Vatican now admits that the historical Magdalene account is fake. Ancient texts actually say that Jesus favored her and kissed her often on the mouth. By the way, I think Mary would have really

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Katy Rose hangs herself with an invisible rope. Crazy!

liked *Blender*. She was a very cool, progressive chick.

DEBBIE LITTELL, PLEASANTON, TEXAS

And we always thought religion was boring. . .

LINGERING OVER MOBY

Get real. Anyone who would put the Doors and not Kiss on a list of the 50 Worst Artists of All Time has been lingering over that picture of Moby with a sock on his penis for way too long.

JEFF MARGOSIAN, ONTARIO, CALIFORNIA

IF POP STARS WERE DOGS...



↑ Fred Durst

↑ Nico the dog

DOES YOUR DOG RESEMBLE A POP STAR?

If the answer is yes, send a photo with your name, address and who your dog is supposed to be to *Blender* at the address below. If we print yours, you'll win a credit card-size Casio two-megapixel digital camera. Awwwww, yes!



Send your photos to:
If Pop Stars Were Dogs,
Blender,
1040 Avenue of the
Americas, 22nd floor,
New York, New York
10018.
Or: your2cents@
blender.com.

Get real — the Doors suck! Kiss, however, rock (and roll all night, apparently. Those scamps!).

LUDACRIS BREAKS THE RULES

As a Scrabble aficionado, I would like to point out that Ludacris ["The Ho'lympics!", October] is wrong: Proper names, such as his *J-E-N* (for Jenny from the block), are not allowed. I would therefore call into question his victory in hip-hop Scrabble, and his overall triumph in the Ho'lympics.

ELAINE JONES, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Actually, it's now a draw.

KATY ROSE'S WEIRD EYES!

My enjoyment of your recent feature on hot, young female artists ["Coming Attractions," October] was curtailed somewhat by the photograph of Katy Rose on page 64, in which the troubled teen appears to be suffering from "Yorke's eye" — her eyeballs are pointing in different directions! Or was that just a look of smoldering eroticism? Or should I just shut up?

BRADLEY JOHNSON, TYLER, TEXAS

Shut up.

BLENDER GOT ME A DATE!

The day the September issue of *Blender* came out, I was so excited, because that meant I would get to do the new crossword. But as with all the other crosswords before, my brain capacity would not allow me to complete the task — so I decided to search for resources. Call the local radio station! Genius. I asked the DJ who answered if he knew who sang "Owner of a Lonely Heart," and he was so willing to help me that he looked it up and called me back. (It's Yes, by the way.) I didn't finish the crossword, but we did go on our first date last week. Thanks, *Blender*!

STACEY JOHNSON, RIVERVIEW, NEBRASKA

COURTNEY LOVE: IS SHE A SPONSORED CHILD?

Flipping through the September issue of *Blender*, I couldn't help but wonder, "Where's crazy Courtney?" Reading about the bizarre antics of Ms. Love every month has been like receiving regular updates about my very own sponsored child: "Dear Sir, you will be happy to know that Courtney Love is doing very well. Your 12 cents a day is going toward helping her rebuild her music career. Courtney loves to dress up like Donald Duck and pick at her crusty feet. . ."

YONG RHEE, GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA



Ludacris: "That's it — PHWLGP! I win!"

MY ONLY CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Longtime reader, first-time writer. (I've always wanted to say that.) After reading your September issue, I felt compelled to write. I'm currently in the U.S. Army, and your magazine has been one of my only links to the outside world recently. I give big-time props to your writers and editors — *Blender* rocks!

TAYLOR HEGELE, HOUSTON

LOINCLOTH-WEARING THREAT

Manowar ["The 50 Worst Artists of All Time," September] is a religion, a law. You must always be careful when you speak about it.

AN ANONYMOUS MANOWARRIOR

We almost didn't include Manowar on our Worst Artists list, on the grounds that no sane person would know who they were. Turns out we were right!

FOUL LANGUAGE!

I have been looking for this type of magazine for years. It is hilarious, and it isn't concerned about printing foul language. *Blender* is the shit!

KERRI HAZEL, GORHAM, MAINE

At last, your search for a magazine full of foul language is over. Yay!

GOOD NAME FOR A BAND! >>

U2-D2

DAVID SCHAPPERT,
STROUDSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

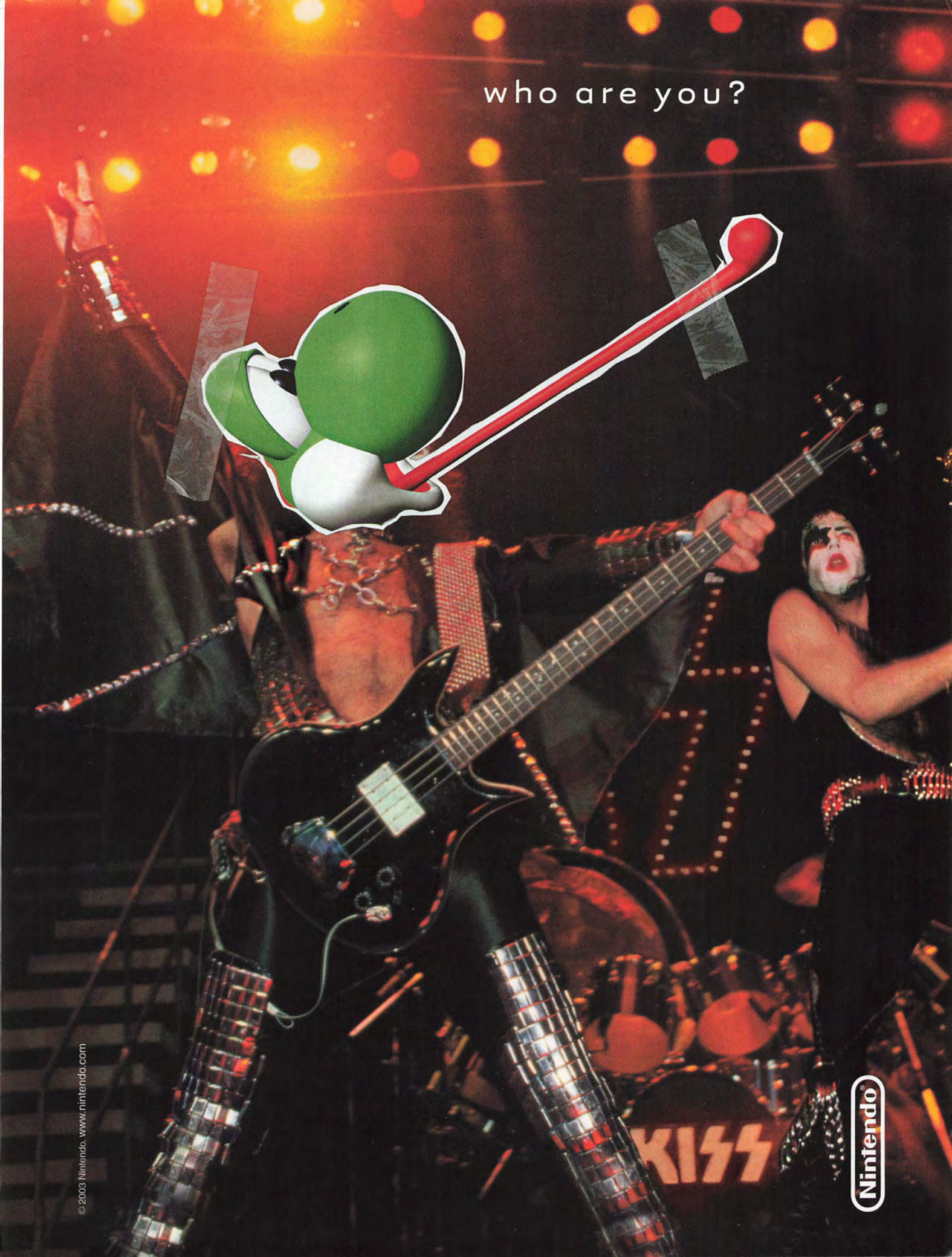


Do you have a good name for a band? Send it to *Blender*! We'll pick the best one we get, and if it's yours, you'll win a sweet Radio Shack portable DVD player just like this one!

Please send your entry to:
Band Names, *Blender*,
1040 Avenue of the
Americas, 22nd floor,
New York, New York 10018.
Or e-mail to:
bandnames@blender.com.
Good luck!



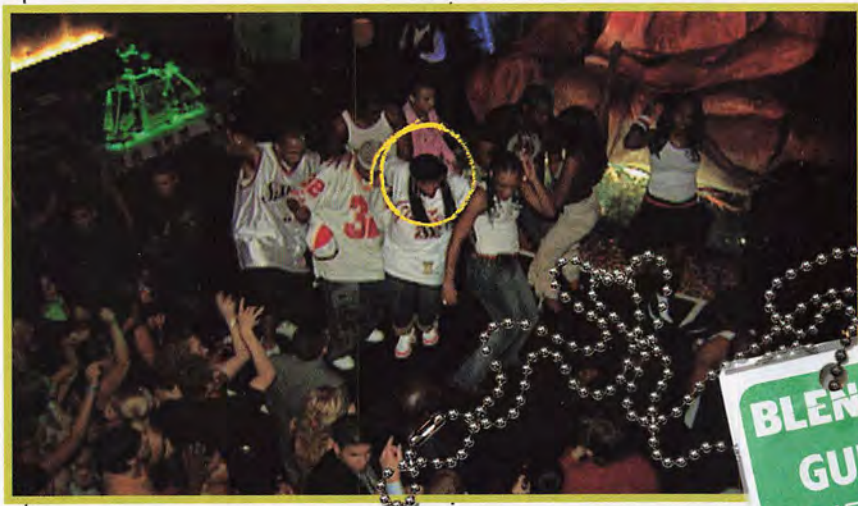
who are you?



BURNER

ALL THE MUSIC. ALL THE NEWS. ALL THE TIME

★ MEN VS. ANIMALS! ★ MADONNA'S NEW BOOK ★ BRITNEY UNDRESSED >>>



Missy Elliott and friends take over the *Blender* VMA party.



Work It!

Missy Elliott, winner of two MTV "moon men," including Best Video of the Year, puts on a surprise performance at the *Blender* after-show party

★ ACCOMPANIED BY an entourage of 20, Missy Elliott arrived at New York nightclub Tao at 3:15 A.M. after MTV's Video Music Awards and made a beeline for the DJ booth. Moments later, the singer and her posse, which included Tweet, took to a makeshift stage and started an unplanned celebratory performance. Elliott's smash hit "Work It" won both Video of the Year and Best Hip-Hop Video at the VMAs.

During a rousing half-hour set, she jumped offstage and danced with the

lucky audience, which included Dave Navarro; Carmen Electra; the Donnas; Junior Senior; Ryan Adams and his girlfriend, actress Parker Posey; plus members of Good Charlotte and the stars of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

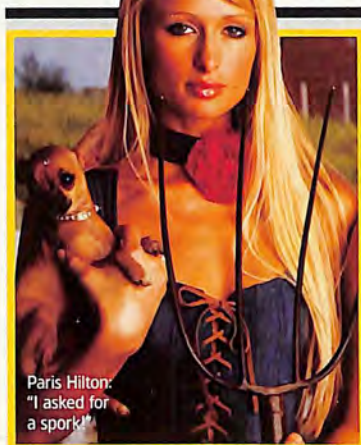
Throughout the night, Madonna's steamy kiss with Britney Spears was a heated topic. Adam Schlesinger of Fountains of Wayne, however, downplayed interest. "As usual with Britney and Madonna, it's all about the music," he deadpanned. How about the *Blender* party? "The best party I was invited to!" NOEL BODDIE



↑ Britney Spears and Madonna swap spit at the VMAs. All right!



→ Missy Elliott, in Scottish garb, with one of her moon men



Paris Hilton:
"I asked for
a spork!"

PARIS HILTON, CONFUSED FARM GIRL IS THE NEW PARIS HILTON, CONFUSED PARTY GIRL

AND OTHER LATE-BREAKING DEVELOPMENTS

College kids
practicing safe-
downloading
techniques

is the new

College kids
practicing
safe-sex
techniques

Train-conductor
hats

are the new

Trucker
hats

Hiding your blog
addiction from
your boss

is the new

Hiding your drug
addiction from
your boss

SARS closely
linked to
animals

is the new

Richard Gere
closely linked
to animals

Pretending
you're getting
married

is the new

Pretending
you're not
getting divorced

Starlets showing
signs of
pregnancy

is the new

Starlets showing
signs of plastic
surgery

Dennis Rodman
drunk, disorderly
on Newport
Beach

is the new

Dennis Rodman
drunk, disorderly
on the basketball court

Celebrity
clothing lines
for dogs

is the new

Celebrity
clothing lines
for "dawgs"

Mary Carey
(California guber-
natorial candidate)

is the new

Mariah Carey



News Roundup!

Italian Prime Minister **SILVIO BERLUSCONI** has written seven love songs for the new album by guitarist **MARIANO APICELLA**, a former cruise-ship crooner who gained notoriety by interrupting meetings with foreign leaders by breaking into song.

Following **JAY-Z** and **DMX's** continual threats to retire, **TIMBALAND** is the latest big name to declare his intention to hang up his hip-hop boots. "I'm [Michael] Jordan; I'm about to get out of it," he said, before listing numerous projects currently in the pipeline.

John Nunes, a 19-year-old from Winston, Oregon, crashed his car after a bee flew into his mouth while he was singing along to the **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** song "Rock Your Body" on the radio. "I kind of panicked and went off the road," Nunes said.

WORD!



"I don't go home and have orgies or anything like that."

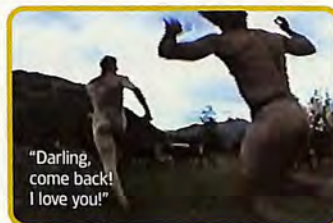
BRITNEY SPEARS DEFENDS HERSELF AGAINST ALLEGATIONS THAT SHE PARTIES TOO MUCH



Wildboyz's Chris Pontius (left) and Steve-O show a profound respect for nature.

Beastly!

The *Jackass* spin-off animal-rightists don't want you to see



"Darling, come back! I love you!"



Test-driving the Toilet Porcupine



"Marco!" "Polo!"

» **JACKASS's** Steve-O and Chris Pontius are launching *Wildboyz*, a new *Crocodile Hunter*-style nature show that premieres October 26 on MTV.

On the series, Steve-O — who was arrested last year for stapling his scrotum in public — travels with Pontius to South Africa, Alaska, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Australia and Florida. During their journeys, they dress in mouse costumes and wrestle with snakes, play keep-away from hyenas with a chunk of meat, run naked with reindeer and, as Steve-O told *Blender*, "party with a bunch of cool Zulus."

According to MTV, animal experts are on hand to make sure the exotic wildlife remains unharmed. The activist group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, however, maintains that "confusing and taunting animals who [don't] understand the 'joke' is cruel and inexcusable."

Naysayers cannot dampen Steve-O's enthusiasm: "The wilderness just got a whole lot wilderier!" **JONAH WEINER**

Pop Star Must-Have GAY MOMENTS!

What better way to celebrate sexuality and promote your career than a same-sex grope?



Pink and her personal assistant



Madonna and Christina Aguilera

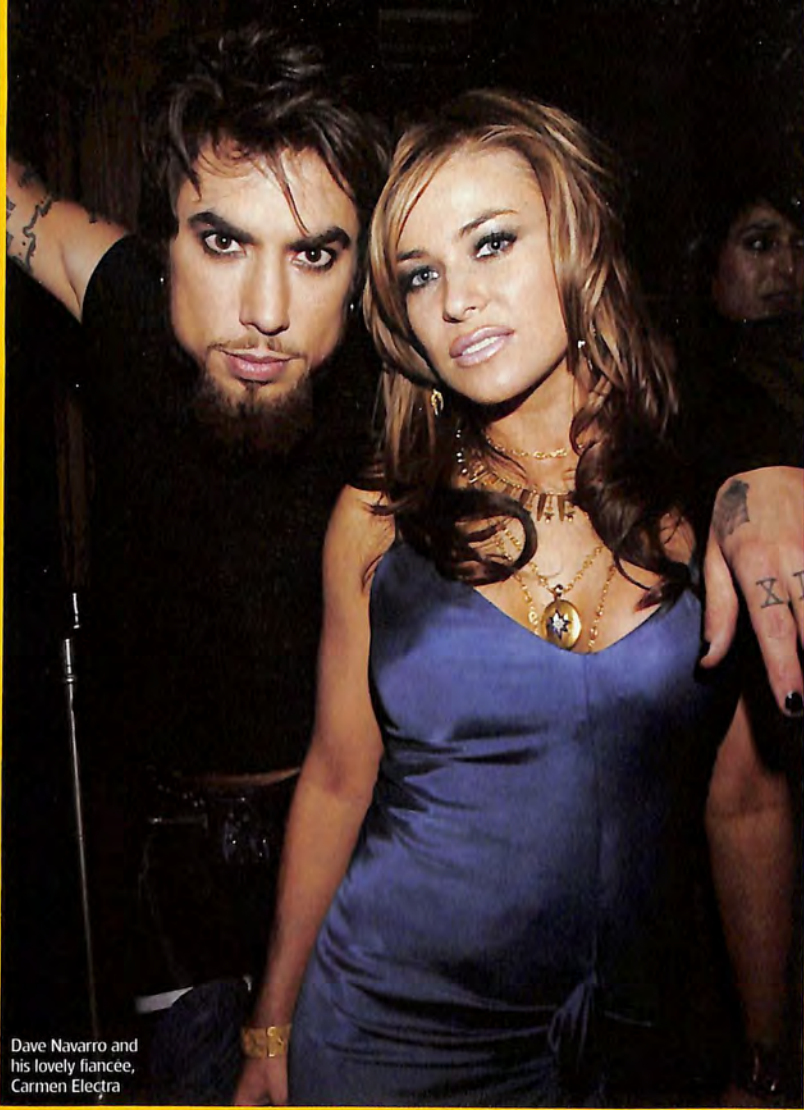


limpbizkit's Mike Smith and Fred Durst



Avril Lavigne and Kelly Osbourne

Courtesy of MTV (Wildboyz: 4); Jeffery Mayer/WireImage.com (Kutcher and Combs); Globe Photos (Pink and assistant); Kevin Kane/WireImage.com (Madonna and Aguilera); Splash News (Smith and Durst); Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic.com (Lavigne and Osbourne); Jim Spellman/WireImage.com (Hanson); AFP Photo/Hector Mata/WireImage.com (Hanson); Steve Grantz/WireImage.com (Duff); Gregg DeGuire/WireImage.com (Lopez); Robert Holmes Corbis (train hat)



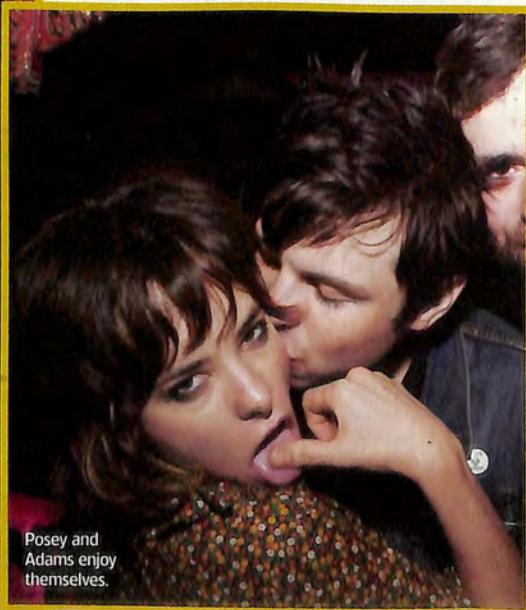
Dave Navarro and his lovely fiancée, Carmen Electra



Benji Madden of Good Charlotte (left) and friend



Actress Parker Posey receives temple relief from boyfriend Ryan Adams.



Posey and Adams enjoy themselves.

← Amy Lee, frontwoman for goth-rockers Evanescence

→ The Donnas, from left: Allison Robertson, Brett Anderson, Maya Ford, Torry Castellano

SPECIAL THANKS TO >>>>

GUESS
BY MARCIANO



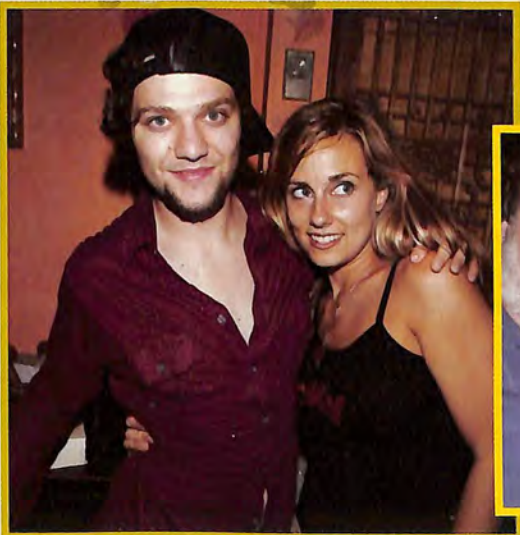
GREY GOOSE

Sobe
adrenaline
rush

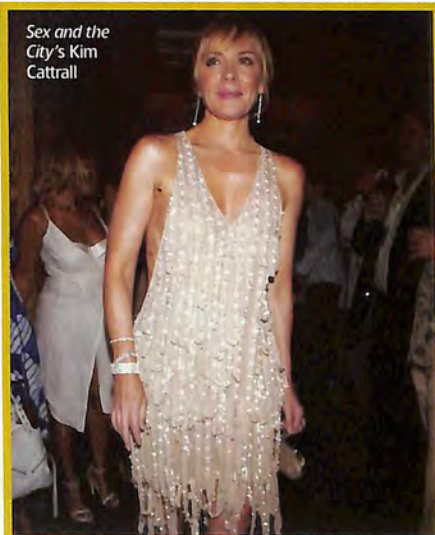


← Skateboarding Jackass star Bam Margera with a female friend

↓ Bam's parents



Sex and the City's Kim Cattrall



↑ Choreographer Wade Robeson, star of his own MTV show (and friend of Michael Jackson), hangs out with a happy pal.



The five stars of Queer Eye for the Straight Guy

Rated The #1 Tasting Vodka In The World.

In 1998, the Beverage Testing Institute of Chicago conducted a blind taste test of more than 40 vodkas. They awarded points based on smoothness, nose, and most importantly, taste. Of all the vodkas, Grey Goose® Vodka emerged victorious, receiving 96 points out of a possible 100.

Founded in 1981, the Beverage Testing Institute conducts tests in a specially designed lab that minimizes external factors and maximizes panelists' concentration. The Institute selects judges based on their expertise, and its tasting and scoring procedures are widely praised as the best in the industry.

Score	Vodka
96	GREY GOOSE® VODKA
94	Canadian Iceberg Vodka
93	Stolichnaya Gold Vodka
92	Staraya Moskva Premium
91	Van Hoo Vodka
91	Stolichnaya Vodka
90	Tanqueray Sterling Vodka
90	Rain 1995 Harvest Vodka
89	Ketel One Vodka
88	Wyborowa Vodka
87	Kremlyovskaya Vodka
86	Finlandia Vodka of Finland
86	Alps French Vodka
85	Sky Vodka
82	Original Polish Vodka
82	Glenmore Special
82	Fleischmann's Royal Vodka
81	Mr. Boston Vodka
80	Pole Star Vodka
80	Lukusowa Potato Vodka
80	Absolut Vodka
78	Cardinal Vodka
78	Barton Vodka
78	Barclay's Vodka
78	Amazon Vodka
76	Skol Vodka
74	Smirnoff Vodka
74	Crystal Palace Vodka
74	Belvedere
72	Schenley
69	Mr. Boston's Riva Vodka

NOTE: THIS REPRESENTS A SAMPLING OF THE 40 VODKAS TESTED.
SOURCE: (BTI) BEVERAGE TESTING INSTITUTE INC.

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The Next Big Thing!



From left: Geoff Rickly, Tucker Rule, Andrew Everding, Tom Keeley, Steve Pedulla, Tim Payne

➤ Their songs feature thrashing guitars and gorgeous melodies.

THURSDAY

➔ Emo's newest kings don't want sex from groupies — they want "brownies"!

BY SARAH WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

➤ "IF A GIRL threw herself at me, I would shit myself!" says Thursday keyboardist Andrew Everding, practically shaking at the thought.

Luckily for the emo sextet from New Brunswick, New Jersey, their female fans are more interested in feeding their idols than in bedding them. "They bring us lots of brownies," he explains.

It seems they need the sustenance. Most of the band sport the skinny emo aesthetic. In fact, not long ago, a doctor diagnosed guitarist Tim Payne as suffering from malnutrition.

"I was eating Doritos mixed into Slim Jims, Fritos wrapped in pepperoni or dipped in mayo," Payne sheepishly admits, blaming his poor

dietary choices on the lifestyle of an indie-rocker signed to an indie label.

After five years of roughing it, Thursday caught Island's attention by selling almost 250,000 copies of *Full Collapse* on Victory Records — impressive sales for a small, independent label that relies on word of mouth. Now, the band has some real cash coming in.

"We are finally in a place," says singer Geoff Rickly, "where if things break, we can fix them."

Tonight, they rock the grounds of Pennsylvania's annual Great Allentown Fair in support of their major-label debut, *War All the Time*. Their set features songs of heartbreak and angst set to thrashing, chaotic guitars and

ALL ABOUT ME!

NAME/AGE
"Geoff Rickly, 25" (Lead singer)

PERSON I'D MOST LIKE TO MEET
"Polly Jean Harvey."

FAVORITE SONG RIGHT NOW
"Maybe Not," by Cat Power."

WON'T TOUR WITHOUT
"My i-Zone camera."

SNEAKERS I'M WEARING
"Puma Romas."

XTINA OR BRITNEY?
"Neither — J.Lo!"

intense, gorgeous melodies.

Despite the venue's unflushable toilets and dilapidated furniture, good-humored Thursday are loath to complain. Well, not to the management, anyway.

"You should see our trailer," says drummer Tucker Rule, cackling. "It looks as though someone was murdered in there. It's straight out of *Deliverance*!" [BLENDER]

➤➤➤ **OUT NOW**
WAR ALL THE TIME ISLAND

Find all 18 things we changed in this picture? Get the answers at vw.com/jetta.



The new Jetta. Worth a closer look. Drivers wanted. 



Jack White's banged-up finger makes its stage debut

UPCOMING TOURS

Don't miss these shows* . . .

THE WHITE STRIPES

America's favorite rock exes are making up dates they canceled due to Jack's smashed finger, an injury sustained in a July car accident. This could be the last time to see them support *Elephant*, their most successful album yet. The set list changes every night, swinging from grating to genius.

>> Mississauga, ON Hershey Centre, Nov. 13 • Montreal Metropolis, Nov. 14 • Providence, RI Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel, Nov. 15 • New York Roseland, Nov. 18-20 • Lowell, MA Paul Tsongas Arena, Nov. 21 • Washington, DC Charles E. Smith Center @ GW University, Nov. 22 • Camden, NJ Tweeter Center at the Waterfront, Nov. 24 • Cincinnati Bogart's, Nov. 25 • Pittsburgh A.J. Palumbo Center, Nov. 26 • Detroit Masonic Temple Theatre, Nov. 28-29 • Cleveland Agora Theatre, Nov. 30

JUNIOR SENIOR

The zany Danish duo put on a hyper show that'll make you feel like you just ate an entire box of Cap'n Crunch. Their live-only cover of Salt-N-Pepa's "Push It" is a booty-shaking encore. Expect to leave the show feeling happy — very happy.

>> New York Bowery Ballroom, Nov. 1 • Cambridge, MA Middle East Club, Nov. 3 • Hoboken, NJ Maxwell's, Nov. 4 • Pittsburgh Club Laga, Nov. 5 • Columbus, OH Little Brother's, Nov. 6 • Cleveland Grog Shop, Nov. 7 • East Lansing, MI Michigan State University, Nov. 8

WILLIE NELSON

Country's 70-year-old pot-smoking legend plays 200 shows this year, each three hours long. (It's not unusual for Nelson to keep going after the lights come on.) Toby Keith joins some dates to play their number 1 duet, "Beer for My Horses."

>> Wisconsin Dells, WI Crystal Grand Theatre, Nov. 8 • Peoria, IL Civic Theater, Nov. 9 • Aurora, IL Paramount Arts Center, Nov. 12 • Robinsonville, MS Grand Casino Tunica, Nov. 14-15 • Little Rock, AR Electric Cowboy, Nov. 16 • Tucson, AZ Desert Diamond Casino, Nov. 28 • Phoenix Dodge Theatre, Nov. 29 • Thousand Oaks, CA Kavli Theatre/Civic Arts Plaza, Nov. 30 • Palm Desert, CA McCallum Theatre, Dec. 1 • Modesto, CA State Theatre, Dec. 2-3 • Los Angeles Royce Hall UCLA, Dec. 4

THE POLYPHONIC SPREE

Twenty-three people in robes put on jubilant concerts, aided by a symphonic percussion set and a full-size harp. John Cameron Mitchell, writer-director-star of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, pops up during a cover of the film's "Wig in a Box."

>> Louisville, KY Headliners, Nov. 10 • Lawrence, KS Liberty Hall, Nov. 12-13 • Boulder, CO Fox Theatre, Nov. 14 • Denver Gothic Theatre, Nov. 15 • Seattle Graceland, Nov. 17 • Portland, OR Aladdin Theatre, Nov. 18 • San Francisco Slim's, Nov. 19-20 • Universal City, CA Universal Amphitheatre, Nov. 22 • San Diego The Scene, Nov. 23-24



"I have four fingers and a thumb! Yeah!"

News Roundup!

A court has declared **MARILYN MANSON** innocent of battery following a 2000 incident onstage in Minneapolis, where he allegedly grabbed security guard David Diaz and rubbed his crotch against the back of Diaz's head. Diaz claimed the incident was unexpected and humiliating.

Rapper **N.O.R.E.** was recently arrested after New York police allegedly found marijuana in his car.

Electro superstar **PEACHES** has revealed that **BRITNEY SPEARS** asked her for songwriting assistance. The strap-on-sporting punk turned down the request. "I thought, 'What can I write for her that they're not going to water down?'" Peaches said.

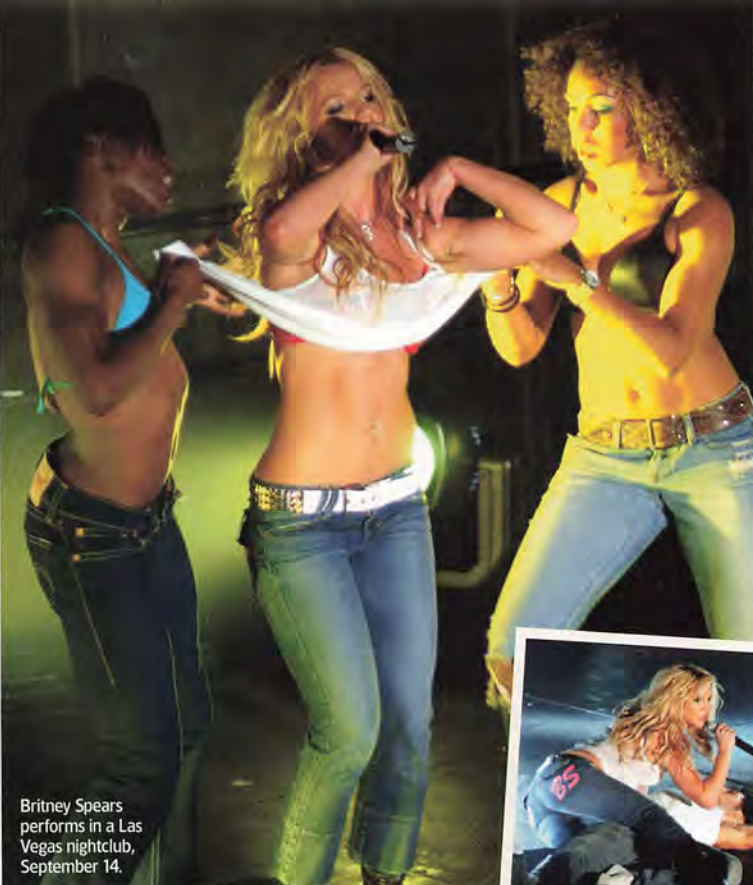
MARIAH CAREY says she hasn't had sex since splitting with Mexican singer Luis Miguel in 2001, and that she doesn't understand why men keep away from her.

WORD!



"I don't have to smell good."

AVRIL LAVIGNE, ON THE BENEFITS OF DAYS OFF



Britney Spears performs in a Las Vegas nightclub, September 14.



Spears wiggles on top of a male dancer.

Hot in Herre

Britney sheds her clothes in racy Sapphic striptease

>> TWO WEEKS AFTER kissing Madonna with her open mouth at the MTV Video Music Awards, Britney Spears engaged in a racy striptease with two girls.

At 1 A.M. on September 14, Spears, 21, appeared unannounced onstage at Rain, a nightclub atop the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas. During her performance, Spears mimicked a same-sex kiss, straddled a male dancer and was relieved of her shirt when two female dancers peeled it off her sweaty torso.



"Oops! I'm nekkid!"

The pop star, who has been spotted recently sporting a red Kabbalah string on her left wrist, ended the 20-minute show in a revealing bra and low-rider jeans that were branded with her initials.

Spears also tried out new material, including "Breathe on Me" and "Me Against the Music," a song she performed at the televised NFL season-kickoff concert.

Both songs are scheduled to appear on her fourth album, *Get in the Zone*, due out November 18. NOEL BODDIE

Weird Band Alert!

50 SHEKEL

A Hebrew homie who raps about "living the Jew life." Oi! Oy!

SO, A JEWISH RAPPER?

Kinda. The orthodox, Brooklyn-born Aviad Cohen, 28, is more like a "shpieler" who rhymes about hard-core Judaism — "Poppin' 'chewit', dating Jewish American Princesses, praying in the temple. . ."

DOESN'T SOUND VERY GANGSTA.

No. He hasn't been shot at and doesn't have a new malt liquor on the market, but he did remake 50 Cent's "In da Club" as "In da Shul."



50 Shekel keeps it kosher.

DOES HE AT LEAST HAVE A POSSE?

No, but he's on the prowl for a female sidekick who is "beautiful, can rap, sing, dance, is in touch with her Jewish identity and also knows her Gucci from her gefilte fish." STEVE LOWE

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RICH'S
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watch
great
price

CARAVELLE BY BULOVA

Styles: 43B17, 45B23, 43B25

The Next Big Thing!

ELEPHANT MAN

➔ He's the dancehall superstar who is named after his monster-size privates. *Oi!*

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

➤➤ ELEPHANT MAN slouches on his hotel bed and wipes sleep from his eyes. It is midday, but Jamaica's latest dancehall king partied until dawn last night.

"Got to give thanks to Bob Marley, Shabba Ranks, Shaggy and Sean Paul," he says, his accent as thick as soup. "They is why I's here. I love these people." He then sings a medley of their hits, eyes shut, lost in his own private world.

Hello . . . ? He snaps out of it: "Dancehall is taking over the world, yeah, yeah, yeah. It's got good vibes, riddim, riddim, riddim and no guns. This be peaceful music, yeah?"

After fronting Jamaica's Scare Dem crew for several years, Elephant Man (born Oneil Bryan 27 years ago in Kingston) released three locally popular solo albums. Eyeing Shaggy-level riches, he then recorded his U.S. debut, *Good 2 Go*, an infectious ragga record featuring Ludacris, Lil Jon and Bone Crusher.

He has also collaborated on projects with Busta Rhymes, Da Brat and Mariah Carey. "They hear my music, love my vibe and send for me," he says. "We work together and fuck things up good!"

But Elephant, known as the Energy God for his crazy stage antics, is a man with a message. "There is a lot of violence among artists back home," he says solemnly. "I want to promote unity, happiness, love and peace."

So why is he named after a hideously deformed soul? "No, no," he says with a throaty laugh. "I'm not named for him! My female fans call me that."

Why do they do that? "They have their reasons," he whispers. [BLENDER]

➤➤ **OUT NOW**
GOOD 2 GO VP

➤ It's infectious ragga featuring Ludacris and Bone Crusher. . .

ALL ABOUT ME!

REAL NAME/AGE
"Oneil Bryan, 27."

PERSON I'D MOST LIKE TO MEET
"God."

OBSESSIONS
"Women and clothes."

LAST BIG MISTAKE
"Taking the wrong plane — I ended up in Miami instead of New York!"

WHAT GOES BEST WITH A SPLIFF?
"Hennessy."

FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH
"My house in Jamaica."

SUIT BY J. LINDBERGH; SHIRT
BY KEENAN DUFFY; JEWELRY
ELEPHANT MAN'S OWN

Wardrobe styling: Nicole Giulotta; prop styling: Paul Whiting; grooming: Andrei Maric-Bryne

IT'S COMING BACK.

↑ Taxis



Alcohol



Charter Buses

EXIT



Claims 6 & 7

HUFF



REYNOL

ALLEN

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No Doubt's music: Now cheaper!



FINALLY!

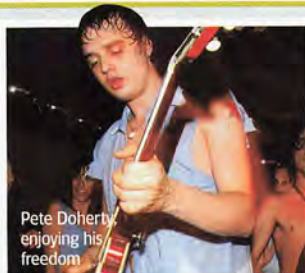
CD prices are lowered — just as *Blender* suggested!

» THE PRICE OF CDs is coming down for the first time since their introduction to the marketplace almost 20 years ago — just as *Blender* recommended (*'Blender Saves the Music Industry,'* April).

Starting on October 1, Universal Music Group will slash the sticker price of compact discs from \$18.98 to \$12.98, a cut of 30 percent. The company, which currently logs \$6 billion in annual revenue, is hoping the discount will stimulate sales. *NICK DUERDEN*



April issue of *Blender*



Pete Doherty enjoying his freedom

PINSTRIPE

Thieving, drug-befuddled ex-Libertines singer goes to jail

EX-LIBERTINES singer Pete Doherty has been sentenced to six months in prison for burglarizing the London home of his former bandmate Carl Barat.

Barat pleaded that Doherty not be jailed, but district judge Roger Davies disagreed, saying, "He probably was suddenly earning too much money for his age. . . . Unlike most of us, who have to study and work hard." An ashen-faced Doherty, who recently admitted to a \$300-a-day crack and heroin habit, replied, "I have worked hard." *STEVE LOWE*

News Roundup!

The re-formed **DOORS** have hit back at fans' complaints that substituting former Cult singer **IAN ASTBURY** for **JIM MORRISON** was a travesty. "[Astbury is] similar to Morrison in many ways," guitarist **ROBBY KRIEGER** claimed. "He's Scottish-English, which Jim was, and he's interested in shamanism and American Indians."

BEYONCÉ was due to perform with **SEAN PAUL** at the MTV Video Awards recently — until **JAY-Z** stepped in. "Jay-Z did not want Sean Paul onstage with her, and he made it clear," the Jamaican star's manager said.

GODSMACK singer Sully Erna says he experiences "past-life regression" when he visits New Orleans. After years of anxiety whenever he went to the city, a psychic healer helped him pinpoint the problem. "I was able to see that I had lived there once, gone through a lot of crazy stuff and died there," he said.

WORD!



"Bitch!"

WHITNEY HOUSTON, SHAKING HER FINGER, TO THE POLICE OFFICER WHO ARRESTED HUBBY BOBBY BROWN FOR VIOLATING HIS PROBATION

☆ Where Are They Now? ☆

Life After Rock



The geniuses behind "Cherry Pie"

Steven Chamberlin

a.k.a. Steven Sweet of Warrant



THEN!
Drummer,
1986–1994

NOW!
Pet Portraitist,
Los Angeles

» "BEING IN WARRANT was a dream come true, almost too fantastic to grasp. All of a sudden, everything we worked for was happening. I stayed away from the drugs, but every night onstage, we were celebrating.

"The end was very strange. The lead singer [Jani Lane] was having difficulty coping and went solo. After the band filed for bankruptcy, he decided to return. I was a little skeptical about his loyalty, and I soon got a phone call from the road manager, who told me I was fired.

"In 1994, I was given art supplies as a gift. I had not painted in about 10 years. Out of high school, I was accepted at the Art

Institute of Pittsburgh, but instead I pursued rock & roll. One of my first portraits was of my dogs Denny and Bo standing in front of the fireplace, wearing ascots. One had a pipe and one a glass of cognac. Those were their personalities.

"I do 'pet portraits with soul,' meaning the personality of the animal and how they interact with you. A lot of people who choose not to have human children prefer to take care of 'fuzzy children.'

People consider animals more than their pets.

"There are all kinds of scenarios, such as a boxer in a boxing ring or a dog in a Hawaiian shirt, beaching it. Often, I try to keep it in the vein of the classier lifestyle: tuxedos, evening gowns, cocktails.

A basic painting takes about four to eight weeks.

"I feel much fuller these days. After leaving Warrant, I wanted to start over, rise from the ashes, do things my own way. This is affording me the chance to do it." *AS TOLD TO JON REGARDIE*



Classy dogs

"My first portrait was of my dogs wearing ascots."



Matthew Cusner/Cusner (Stefani), Alphonse Telymonde (Stefani), J. Scott Wynne/Reina Ltd. (Doherty, top), Roger Smith/Reina Ltd. (Doherty, bottom), Jon Perrin/Reina Ltd. (Warrant), courtesy of Steven Chamberlin (Chamberlin, dogs), Gary French (illustration)

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PLAYLIST

The best new songs to download!

DIZZEE RASCAL "I LUV U"

The 18-year-old future of British hip-hop flows over barks and beats in this captivating vocal battle.

RYAN ADAMS "NOTE TO SELF"

Alt-country's scruffy hero switches gears from twang to grunge on this brooding ode to love gone sour.

DJ TIM "LIKE I LOVE BUSINESS"

MTV's blackest white boys appear on this mash-up: Eminem's vocals from "Business" over Justin Timberlake's "Like I Love You."

THE DARKNESS "GET YOUR HANDS OFF MY WOMAN"

Over-the-top cock-rockers (number 1 in the U.K.) with an otherworldly falsetto and gleefully heavy '80s-metal riffs.

OUTKAST "HEY YAI!"

André 3000 and Big Boi dip into pop territory with this upbeat, feel-good tune suffused with typically quirky Outkast sounds.

Laura Young

WORD!



"I'm very giving in relationships — kind of selfless, in a way."

JENNIFER LOPEZ

SPECIAL
2004
ELECTION
PREVIEW!

Do They Rock?

THE

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES



I like
Radiohead!

We polled the contenders about their musical tastes and asked what song they'll choose for their inaugural balls — if they dare dream of winning...

BLENDER BALLOT

- ☐ 1 Favorite artist or band of all time?
- ☐ 2 Do you play an instrument? Have you ever been in a band?
- ☐ 3 What artist would you invite to play your Inaugural Ball? What would be your Ball's theme song?
- ☐ 4 Favorite Beatle?



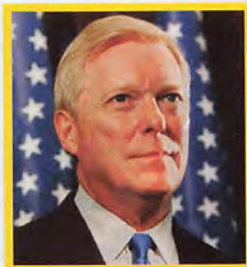
HOWARD DEAN

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
Wyclef Jean, right now.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
Harmonica, piano and guitar — all of them badly!
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
That would be too presumptuous for me to say!
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
George Harrison.



JOHN EDWARDS

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
Bruce Springsteen.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
Saxophone in high school.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
John Mellencamp, and the theme song would be "Small Town."
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
Paul McCartney.



DICK GEPHARDT

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
Eric Clapton.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
No.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
The Call, "Here's to You." It's our campaign's theme song.
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
George Harrison.



BOB GRAHAM

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
Jimmy Buffett.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
No, but I have always wanted to play the guitar.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
Jimmy Buffett, playing "Changes in Attitudes, Changes in Latitudes."
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
Paul McCartney.



JOHN KERRY

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
The Rolling Stones, the Dead.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
Bass in a band, the Electras, but more recently, classical guitar.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen. Moby has been giving his time.
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
John Lennon.



DENNIS KUCINICH

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
The Beatles.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
No.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
Willie Nelson, and the theme song at the ball would be John Lennon's "Imagine."
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
John Lennon.



CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
Pianist Keith Jarrett.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
Not really, but I played clarinet in the high-school band.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
I'm not going to jinx my election like that!
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
John Lennon.

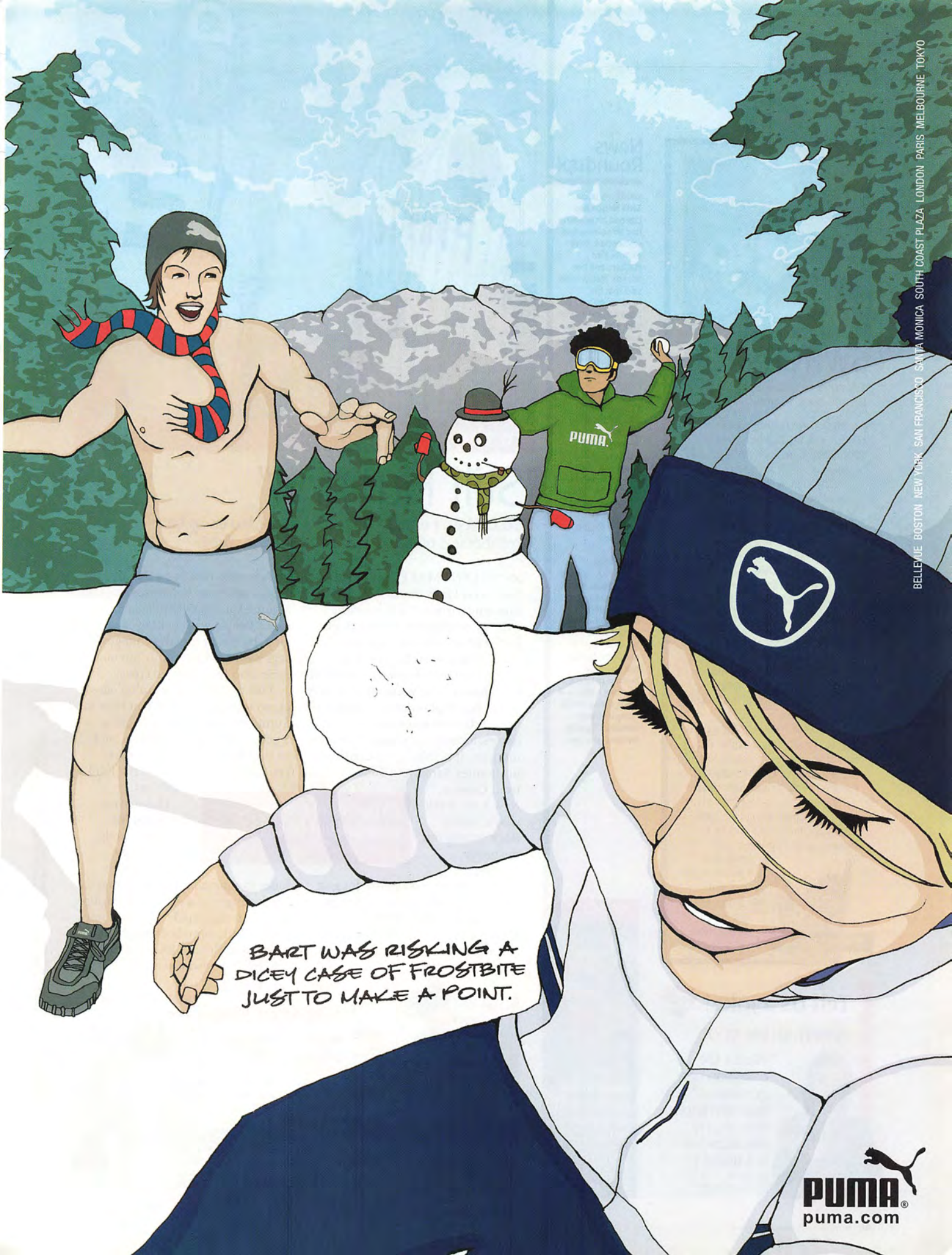


AL SHARPTON

- 1 FAVORITE ARTIST
James Brown.
- 2 PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
No.
- 3 INAUGURAL BALL TALENT
If he were still alive, I'd ask Sam Cooke. My theme song would be "A Change Is Gonna Come."
- 4 FAVORITE BEATLE
Ringo Starr.

Note: Not all of the "Playlist" songs are legally available for download — yet. In those instances, Blender encourages you to purchase the original CD. This page: AFP/Corbis (burning, Graham); Digital Vision/Getty/Newscom (donkey); Reuters/Corbis (Dean, Moseley Braun); Alex Wong/Getty/Newscom (Edwards); Reuters/Newscom (Gephardt); Picture Desk/Newscom (Kerry); Getty/Newscom (Sharpton).

Joe Lieberman and Wesley Clark declined to participate in Blender's survey.



BART WAS RISKING A
DICEY CASE OF FROSTBITE
JUST TO MAKE A POINT.



Something smells stinky.

SWITCHEROO

Sex author Madonna releases second book — aimed at kiddies

>> MADONNA HAS hit back at criticism that the woman behind the 1991 coffee-table book *Sex* is not the best person to pen a children's title.

"The journey I have traveled between [then] and now is too vast and complex to define in a few sentences," she explained. "I am on my own spiritual path and have learned a great many things. Children are naturally open and expansive, so I thought I would start sharing with them first."

Nicholas Callaway, CEO of Callaway Editions, the series' publisher, agrees that kids are the perfect target for the 40-year-old pop star. "Just about everyone is familiar with Madonna's name and work," he says. "The exception is the [series'] core audience."

In *The English Roses*, the first of five volumes, the singer and mother of two offers advice on how to deal with jealousy and envy. In *Sex*, she shared advice on lesbian bondage and masturbation.

"Sometimes I stick my finger in my pussy and wiggle it around the dark wetness and feel what a cock or a tongue must feel like when I'm

sitting on it. I pull my finger out, and I always taste it and smell it," she wrote.

— STEVE LOWE



Madonna's last book

Tell Us a Joke!

TOMMY SHAW, STYX



"What's the definition of a gentleman? A man who knows how to play the accordion but doesn't."

AS TOLD TO
BARRY MCCOCKNER

News Roundup!

EMINEM's uncle Todd Nelson has claimed his nephew had three-in-a-bed sex sessions with ex-wife Kim Mathers and her friends. Nelson also said that the rapper's ex-wife is bisexual and would take girlfriends to bed while waiting for her husband to arrive home. "It's every man's dream, right?" he said.

Estranged '60s duo **SIMON & GARFUNKEL** are re-forming for a U.S. tour. Asked about the pair's differences, Paul Simon said, "We've known each other since age 11. Forgive, forget, move on."

CHRISTINA AGUILERA says she has been surprised by the abuse that greeted her sexually liberated image change but believes some of the terms hurled her way have positive meanings. "Call me a slag — if being a slag means being a strong woman. I'll gladly be that," she says.

WORD!



"I am a natural fat person just dying to get out."

BEYONCÉ KNOWLES, ON WHY SHE HAS TO STICK TO DIETS



In the Studio

"Still Hungry!"

50 Cent isn't resting on his solo-career laurels as he collaborates on the G-Unit posse's debut. Yum!

>> "50 CENT MAKES my blood boil," says Lloyd Banks, 50's long-time mic partner. "Whenever he writes a new rhyme, I wanna come back with something right away!"

"I gotta stay on the top of my game," 50 Cent responds. "And I'm still hungry." For years, this friendly rivalry has kept the streets ankle-deep in G-Unit mix tapes — notorious bootlegs released almost monthly, it seems, by 50 Cent and his homies Banks and Tony Yayo, all from Queens, New York. Nashville's Young Buck rounds out the group.

Despite Yayo's current prison stint for gun charges, he will appear on *Beg for Mercy*, due in late fall. He laid down verses before his sentence began and will tour with G-Unit upon his release in January.

"You hear this, you're gonna feel like a star."

Recorded mostly on the road in a studio-equipped bulletproof bus, the album explores G-Unit's flashier side. "People want to know about girls, how your lifestyle changes," says Banks, who recently put down \$100,000 for a jeweled cross.

One of their ass-bumping odes to extravagance is "Teach You How to Stunt." "I don't care if you got a \$3,000 outfit on or only 100 bucks in your pocket — you hear this, you're gonna feel like a star!" Banks promises.

They haven't left 'hood life behind entirely, though. "My Buddy," a love letter to a pistol, captures former crack slinger 50 Cent and his troupe in full-on thug mode. "If this comes on in a club, somebody might get hurt!" Buck leers. "It'll turn cowards into killers!" **JONAH WEINER**

ALSO IN THE STUDIO >>>



Jim Adkins of Jimmy Eat World tames wild guitar beast.

<< Indie-rockers JIMMY EAT WORLD are holed up at Ocean studio in Burbank, California, cutting the follow-up to 2001's self-titled platinum-seller, due early 2004...

Philadelphia rappers **THE ROOTS** are in a studio in the City of Brotherly Love recording their sixth CD, the follow-up to 2002's *Phrenology*. It's due next April...

213 (Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg and Warren G) are planted in Snoop Dogg's Los Angeles home studio, the Chuuch, recording a debut that's planned for December...

Electropop troupe **FISCHER-SPONER** are recording their second album in Rare Book Room studios in Brooklyn, New York, for a 2004 release...



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Useful Tips From the Stars!

HOW TO...

Make Glögg

Danish duo **the Raveonettes** reveal their secret recipe for staying toasty during those cold Scandinavian nights. This Christmas, pour yourself a big mug o' glögg!

BY STEVE KANDELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

1 GET ROTTEN!

Sune Rose Wagner: "If you're in Denmark, you're pretty much forced to drink glögg around Christmas — it's wonderful for keeping warm, and it gives you a nice buzz. When someone's cooking up a batch, the whole house smells like glögg. It reminds people of relaxing at home and having a chat with Dad."

2 GET SYRUPY!

Sharin Foo: "Brew up half a bottle of aquavit schnapps over a low flame, then add sugar, cumin, cinnamon sticks and cardamom seeds — always use sticks and seeds, never the powder. You can add orange peels, too. Once the sugar and spices melt, filter through a strainer so only the alcohol is left."

3 GO NUTS!

Foo: "Add the syrup to a pot with some port and red wine, one part syrup to four parts wine. Our producer, Richard Gottferrer, likes to pour in vodka. Heat over a low flame, but don't boil it. Then add raisins and sliced almonds and let it sit for a while. The nuts and raisins soak up the alcohol and rise to the top."

4 SEASON TO TASTE!

Wagner: "Serve glögg warm in a mug. It's extremely good for a hangover, the same way people in Ireland drink Guinness to settle the stomach. Nobody gets totally shitfaced off glögg — it's too sweet, so you would probably throw up before getting too drunk off it. We should serve glögg at our December shows!"



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- 6 Philadelphia, PA
- 7 New York, NY
- 8 Washington, DC
- 10 Detroit, MI
- 11 Indianapolis, IN
- 12 Chicago, IL
- 13 St. Louis, MO
- 16 Orlando, FL
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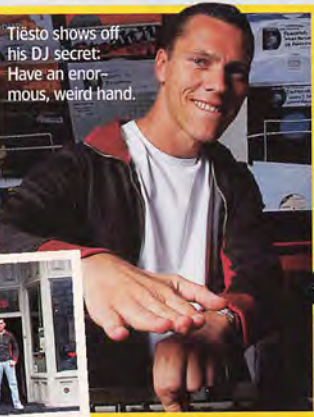
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What's in Your Bag? ☆

Tiesto shows off his DJ secret: Have an enormous, weird hand.



TIËSTO

Plastic Fantastic, 35 Drury Lane, London



SIZE TRIPLE DDD "NOBODY LISTENS TO TECHNO"

"They sample Eminem's 'Without Me' ['Nobody listens to techno'] and prove him wrong. I love to watch the crowd go berserk."



PARIS & HEALEY "RIPPED/DEEP THROAT"

"This is a big, uplifting tune for the peak of the night. People go nuts for it. It was released by Plastic Fantastic, my favorite record store in London."



CHRIS B "LAST MINUTE FLIGHT"

"I play this when the night is still young and fresh. You can feel the tension building and everybody getting excited. Watch the vibe pick up!"



DAVE GAHAN "DIRTY STICKY FLOORS (JUNKIE XL REMIX)"

"It's my good friend Junkie XL's fantastic remix with fresh new sounds. It's guaranteed to get everybody going. An epic!" JAMES LUSCOMBE

→ TIËSTO'S NEW ALBUM, *NYANA* (NETTWERK), IS OUT NOW.

Obits

WESLEY WILLIS
40, August 21, in Evanston, Illinois, of chronic myelogenous leukemia. Schizophrenic "outsider" musician. In the '90s, the six-foot-five, 300 pounds-plus Chicagoan rose from a street peddler of homemade tapes to a celebrated recording artist with a major-label contract.

FLOYD TILLMAN
88, August 22, in Houston, of leukemia. Country Music Hall of Famer who wrote and sang such classics as "I Love You So Much It Hurts" and "It Makes No Difference Now." Tillman had just completed an album of duets with his admirers Merle Haggard, George Jones and Willie Nelson.

TONY JACKSON
63, August 18, in Nottingham, England. Bassist and vocalist for '60s Liverpool band the Searchers, who as part of the Merseybeat and British Invasion crazes scored such hits as "Needles and Pins" and "Love Potion No. 9."

ED TOWNSEND
74, August 13, in San Bernardino, California, of heart failure. Produced and cowrote Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On." Had a Top 20 hit on his own with 1958's "For Your Love."



Warren Zevon, 1976

Warren Zevon 1947-2003

The singer-songwriter, 56, died in his sleep of lung cancer on September 7 in West Hollywood

➤➤ AT LEAST WARREN ZEVON, the rambunctious singer-songwriter who died at the young age of 56, lived to achieve his final ambition. Last September, upon announcing his terminal lung cancer, the life-long smoker said, "It'll be a drag if I don't make it till the next James Bond movie comes out."

The son of a minor Chicago gangster-cum-boxer, Zevon gravitated into the most cultured circles. At 13, he yearned to be a classical pianist, and hobnobbed with Stravinsky. Later, as a maverick California rock & roller, his storytelling lyrics attracted such novelists as Thomas McGuane and Carl Hiaasen to write with him.

Although he lost five years in the mid-'80s by consuming vast amounts of vodka and prescription drugs and then recovering from his addictions, his recent greatest-hits collection, *Genius*, merits its title, as proven by the sardonic "Lawyers, Guns and Money," the sweet heroin song "Carmelita," the utterly wacko

"Werewolves of London" ("A dumb song for smart people," he called it) and many more.

In 1991, in character as Mr. Bad

Example, he wrote a fitting epitaph. The reprobate who worked at his father's carpet store concluded — as his courageous creator might have — "I'll see you in the next life. Wake me up for meals!" PHIL SUTCLIFFE

His recent greatest-hits collection, *Genius*, merits its title. ☆

WARREN ZEVON His greatest CDs



WARREN ZEVON
ASYLUM, 1976

★★★★

The L.A. mellow myth chewed out by his lupine skepticism (and great tunes).



EXCITABLE BOY
ASYLUM, 1978

★★★★

Bloodthirsty pulp and antiheroes dominate. It's still rude fun for less-dainty tastes.



SENTIMENTAL HYGIENE
VIRGIN, 1987

★★★★

Refreshing post-alcoholic pummeling of everyone, including himself.

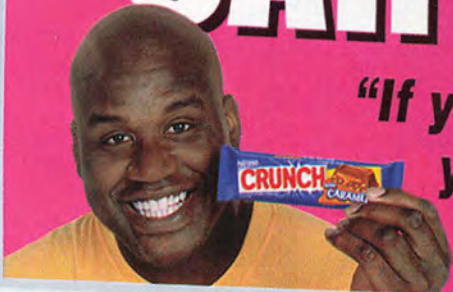


GENIUS: THE BEST OF WARREN ZEVON
RHINO/ELEKTRA, 2002

★★★★★

Acidic, acerbic, sometimes lovely Zevon primer.

☐ **VOTE FOR**
"CAR-A-MEL"



*"If you know how to spell,
 you'll vote for Car-a-mel."*
— SHAQ

☒ **VOTE FOR**
"CAR-MEL"

*"Don't vote with Shaq!
 His pronunciation is wack!"*
— Percy



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YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

Method Man

➔ He's freaked out by goldfish, used to sell stolen lollipops and lusts after... Star Jones. What, is the 32-year-old Wu-Tang Clan star stoned or something? Oh...

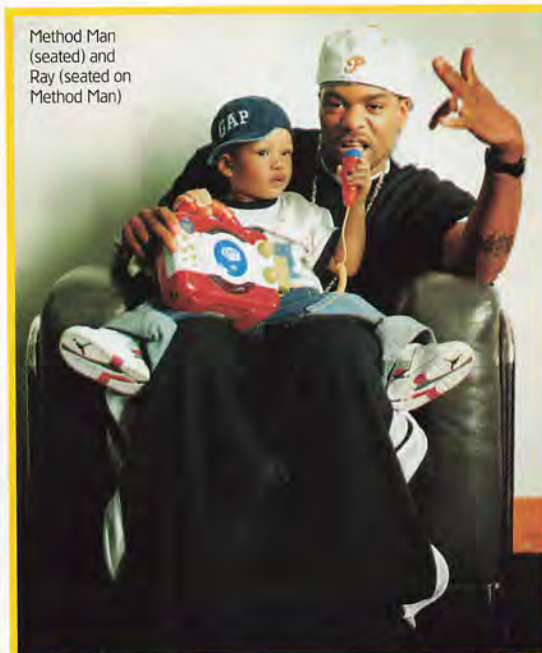
BY JONAH WEINER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BARRY

★ WU-TANG CLAN MEMBERS aren't known for punctuality. So it's a small shock when *Blender* enters a spacious lounge in New York City's Hit Factory recording studios and finds that Method Man, the Clan's biggest star, has beaten us here.

Working a two-way pager with one hand while clutching a suspiciously tightly rolled cigar in the other, the six-foot-four Clifford Smith is getting his beard trimmed. Trading the blunt for a mirror, he checks himself out and groans. "My face looks *naasty!*"

He's being characteristically modest about his appearance. When he released the double-platinum *Tical* in 1994, the handsome rapper buried himself in a junkyard of gold fronts and colored contacts. Today, with a series of movies under his belt — including a starring role in the 2001 stoner comedy *How High* — Mef has quit the disguises but kept the humility.

Two hours and half a blunt later, we're just starting the interview, and it's clear that Method Man still follows his own clock (his third album, *Tical 0: The Prequel*, has been five years in the making). His year-and-a-half-old son, Ray, sits on his lap but can't distract him. Nor does his presence keep Method's language clean: "That question is fucking wack!" he erupts at one point, grinning.



Method Man (seated) and Ray (seated on Method Man)



"Damn you, Ang Lee..."

You dealt drugs when you were a teenager. How come your rhymes never refer to that part of your past?

SHOTEEBANGZ, SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA

I hated having to go out on the block and scramble — that's the worst job in the world, especially if you ain't making any real money. I was selling crack cocaine, running up on cars with, like, 16 other motherfuckers all sellin' shit in the same spot. Five minutes later, TNT [Tactical Narcotics Team] raids the block, and everybody gotta scamper. I hated that shit.

What's your favorite slang word, and can you use it in a sentence?

YPSILANDRO, PORTLAND, OREGON

Silverback. If you're a gorilla nigga, if you can just roar and twist someone's fuckin' head off, then you're a silverback. It's like the alpha male.

When you were a kid, your parents fought a lot, and you spent most of

your time living with your mother. Do you and your dad still talk?

CUTIETHONG, BOISE, IDAHO

Nah. I don't fuck with the dude. Last time we talked was about eight years ago. It's the old story: He wasn't around much. He didn't fuck with me then, why fuck with him now?

What's the most treasured comic book you own?

KHOOLIA9, DECATUR, GEORGIA

Wolverine's first appearance ever, in *The Hulk* — I think it's issue 189 [actually 181]. I found it six years ago and paid \$300 for it, and now it's worth \$1,500. I have 15,000 comics in a warehouse, all bagged individually. You have to use the acid-free joints, or the color comes off.

Which kiss was hotter at the VMAs — Madonna and Christina Aguilera or Madonna and Britney Spears?

CAMCAM2001, HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK

Britney, because she slipped Madonna the tongue.

Why did you say that you regretted winning a Grammy in 1996 for your song "I'll Be There for You/All I Need to Get By," with Mary J. Blige?

GF_JENNIE, CHICAGO

The experience was fucked up. They sat me in the fan seats, and I had my pregnant woman with me. Then I had to talk with interviewers who didn't know who I was: "Why do you wear your pants rolled up?" You wouldn't ask Michael Jackson why he wears high-waters! Then it was like, "OK, take your Grammy and get the fuck out of here."

You worked with Fred Durst on his single "All N 2gether Now." How would you rate his skills as an MC?

MR_KRAKALAK, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

In his area of MCs, I would place him at an 8. But as far as *our* MCs, he'd probably be about a 4. If he approached a freestyle cipher on ➔

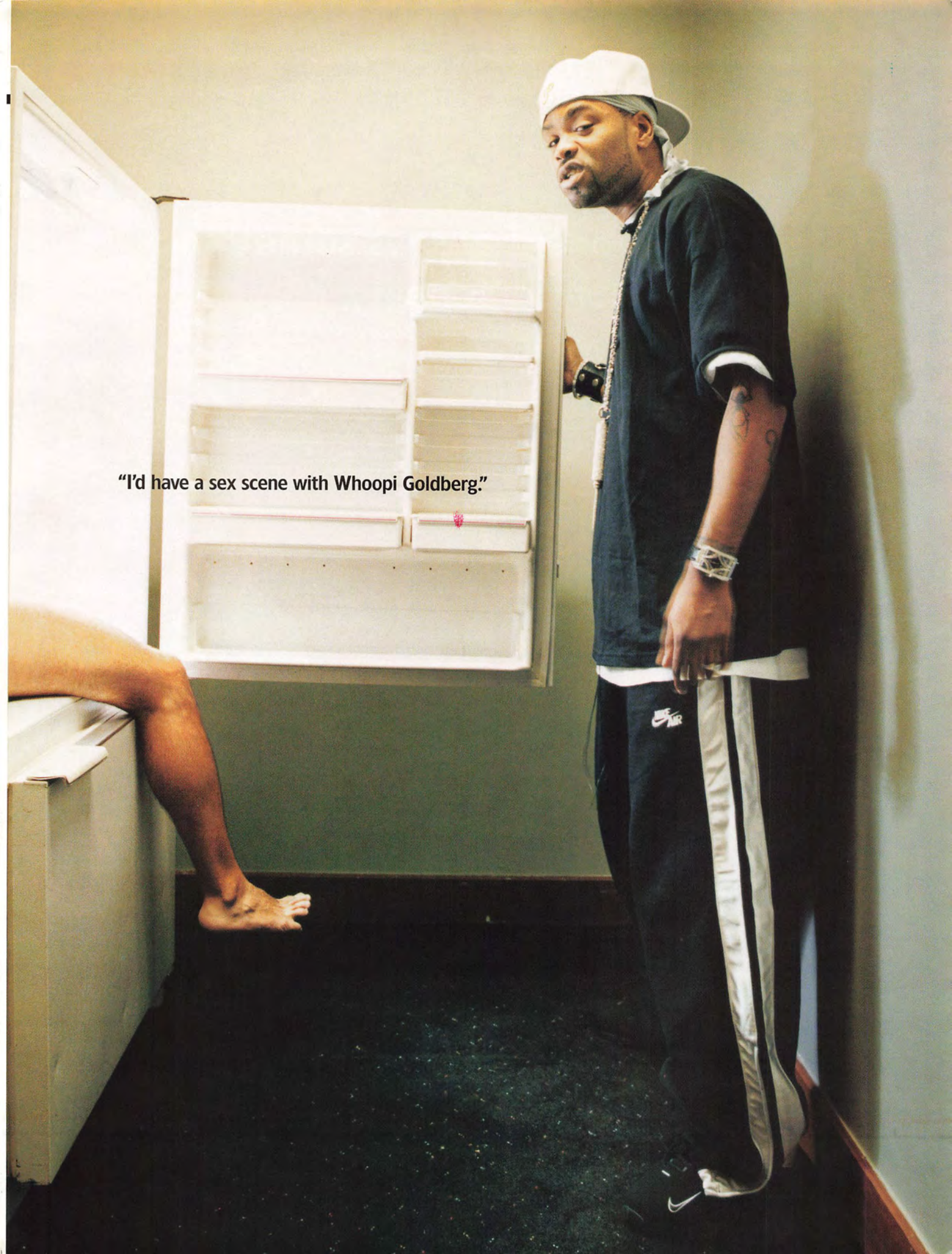
DEAR SUPERSTAR >>>

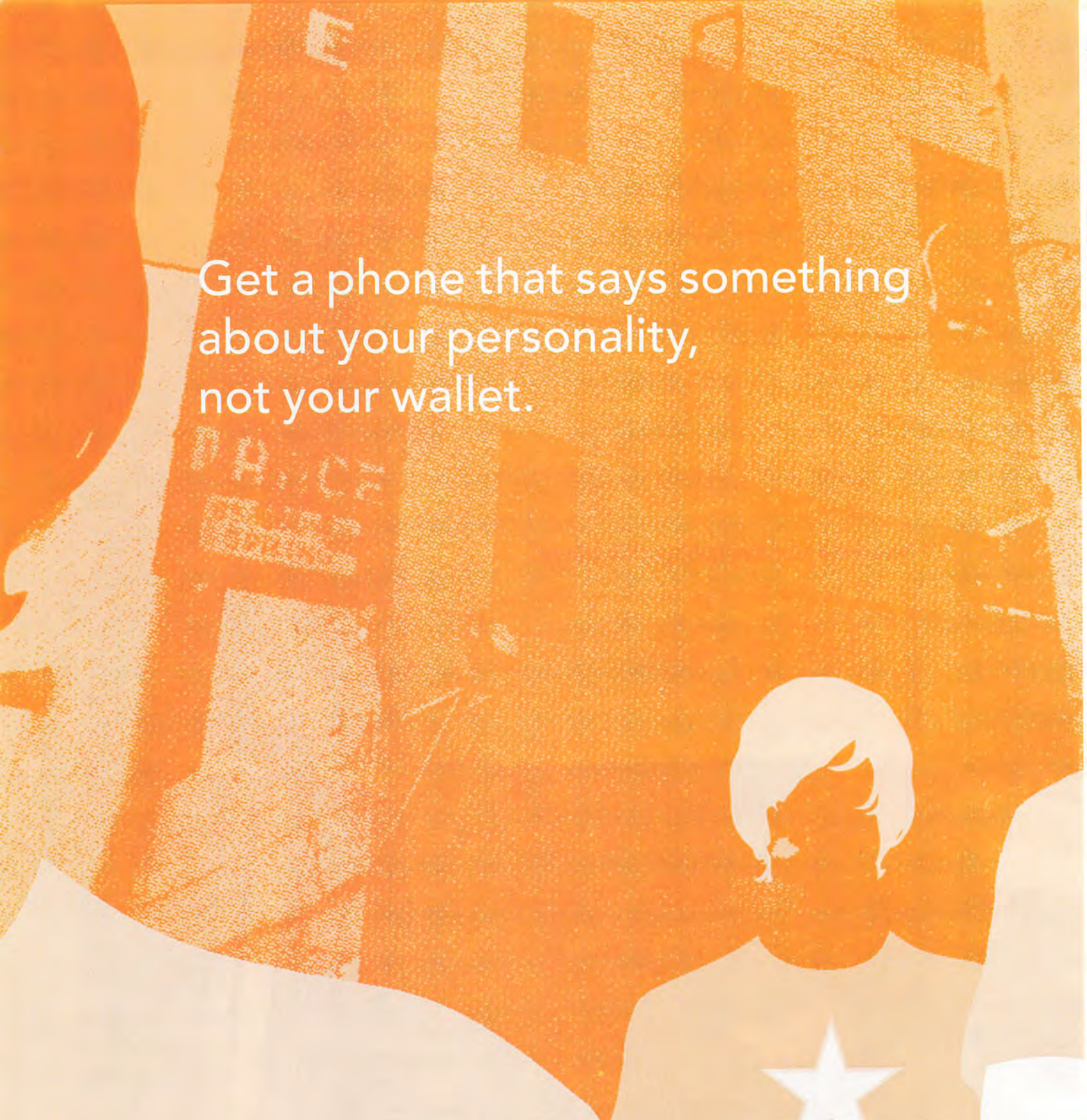
Got a question you're desperate to ask a superstar? Let *Blender* be your intermediary. Send your questions to us, and we'll put the smartest to the world's greatest music stars. Neat, huh?

Just check out blender.com for upcoming interviews. Then be sure to put your name and contact information on your question. Good luck!

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"I'd have a sex scene with Whoopi Goldberg."





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★ METHOD MAN

my street corner, I'd give him a shout, but people wouldn't feel him.

Are you really doing a documentary on strippers, or is that just an excuse to go to a bunch of strip clubs?

FREEZEPHANTOM, BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

No, I was like, "I want to do a documentary about strippers, 'cause it's a moneymaker. Let's do it." Straight to DVD with it. I went to clubs in New York, Miami, Houston and L.A. One girl who stands out was this Miami stripper. She still lives with her mother and father, and they know she strips. They call her by her stripper name, Freaky Red. That's the ultimate for me. The movie is done, but I'm not sure when it'll come out.

You have three kids. Do you and your wife take turns on diapers?

MAXAMILLION, BELFAST, MAINE

Mommy does it all. If I'm wiping my ass and a little shit gets on my finger, I freak the fuck out. Same reason I have no pets, because it just smells like the animal's ass all up and down the house. I can't even have a goldfish, because I'll be high, trying to eat a bowl of cereal, and look at it and be like, "Why the eyes gotta be on both sides of the head? Why those scales be movin'?" Freak me the fuck out!

I'm a gay hip-hop fan. Do you think there will ever be an openly gay gangsta rapper?

NIGHTSHADEZ83, CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA

I don't think any gay dude is gangsta, period. How many gangsters you know, from Al Capone up to John Gotti, been gay? You can't be fuckin' people in the ass and say you're gangsta. I'm against gay marriage, too. We're here to reproduce.

Will they ever find a cure for the dreaded "blurry hand"?



The possibly color-blind Star Jones



Def Jam Vendetta: The 2D Meth

What's the most weed you've ever smoked in one sitting?

BULLTPOOF9893, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

It depends. If I got a flight to catch and I just bought a half o-z, I'll smoke it all — I can't get weed on a plane, 'cause I've been red-flagged.

The most I've smoked in a day was over an ounce, in Germany. It was a big-ass plastic bag, and Redman had one, too. Took us 12 hours, while we were doing interviews. We sat in a hotel room and they brought dudes in, one after the other. After a while, you can't get any higher. It's like your head is in a wind tunnel — everything is vibrating.

If you could do a love scene with any actress, who would it be?

GOLDFANGERR, SCHAUBERG, ILLINOIS

I don't want to say Halle Berry, because that's what everybody says. I'd have a sex scene with Whoopi Goldberg or Star Jones. I'd knock that there! Whoopi would make me laugh in bed. And Star Jones, she looks like she can cook: the way to a man's heart!

You once called Snoop Dogg the worst rapper/actor. Who's the best?

JIM88763478, HOUSTON

Mos Def. He represented in *Bamboozled* when he played Big Blak Afrika — nobody could've played that the way he played it. I liked Snoop in *The Wash*, though. And I loved him in *Training Day*. He was like, "Shit, put me in the front seat

with him; I bet I'll whip his ass" — that was the best line of the movie right there.

In the Def Jam Vendetta video game, your character's special move involves clawing your opponent's nuts. When was the last time you got into a fight?

DADONDADA1, KENT, OHIO

No, that move is Redman's. Mine is the "Methalizer," where I crack a dude's back over my shoulders, throw his legs up in the air and then crush his head on the floor. It's been so long since I was in a real fight. I'm a peaceful dude. About 12 years ago, some guy walked up on me, said my name and punched me right in my motherfuckin' face. Boom! I went down on one knee and felt my own Walkman come flying past my face — swoosh — it barely missed me. I grabbed him, he fell to the floor and I was crawlin' up his chest, about to let him have some Ultimate Fighting Championship shit, but his brother jumped me from behind.

Hey, Right Guard pitchman: Which do you recommend, the stick or the gel?

JAKYLLFIRE, DENVER

The stick. It lasts longer. I go with the Power Stripe. I asked them for a free carton, but they don't send me shit. Or they did, and I never got it. There's probably a bunch of Power Stripe floating through the Def Jam offices right now. That's how it is at Def Jam — sometimes they steal your shit!

What exactly were you doing to make money before you joined the Wu-Tang Clan in 1992?

RDREYNOLDSJR, CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

Scramblin', sellin' drugs. All my legitimate jobs were embarrassing. I used to be stock boy at an Odd-Lot, making \$35 a day. So to make those checks better, I used to steal lollipops and sell them at school — but I got caught. Stealin' fucking lollipops!

I've lived in New York City all my life, and I've never once been to Staten Island. If I visit, where should I go?

BATS199, BROOKLYN

Someplace besides Staten Island. It's boring as hell out there. Growing up, there was nothing to do. Every time someone would throw a party, it'd end up in a fight. There's a good place to get Italian ices, though: Ralph's on Port Richmond Avenue. Go there and get your icy.



The Wu-Tang Clan: Didn't ODB used to be taller?



"I'll tell you about 'living in a goldfish bowl!'"

Matthew Jordan Smith (Corbis Outline Images); courtesy of Island Def Jam (Def Jam Vendetta); Photos: Blue/Getty Images (goldfish); Bob Berghel (Wu-Tang Clan)

Have you ever had your hair cut at the Wu-Tang-owned beauty salon in Staten Island?

SATIQUEWON, WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

Hell, no. That was a family-owned business, and families fuck your shit up. But you're talking about Wu-Nails — I don't think they did hair anyway. Wu-Tang should've stayed out of the salon business, and the clothing business, too. When Wu-Wear started making shoes and sneakers and pants, it was shoddy material. I never rocked that shit.

What would you do if you found a dime bag of weed in one of your kids' bedrooms?

NENEBOOM, GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT

I'd take it. Then I'd approach him, smokin' a joint of his shit. I'd be like, "Here, hit this, hit it!" As soon as he put it to his lips, I'd slap the shit out of him. Then I'd smoke it and be like, "This weed is mine now." I don't want him smokin' that shit at all. I was fucked up because I had people pushin' that shit in my face from age 11.

You've claimed that your penis has grown since you made your last album. By how much, and is there a special diet you can tell me about?

DOC BOOGIE, POULTNEY, VERMONT

I was joking, man. But I've got a tip: Lose weight. That's how your penis grows. And shave all the hair off — that's the trick.

Redman's house on *MTV Cribs* was a dump. Is yours any nicer?

LILFREFRE, GARY, INDIANA

I'm in between homes right now, but my last house was dope. Four bedrooms, basement, Jacuzzi, projection-screen TV. Walk-in shower with a bench. I put all that shit in myself.

Who's number 1 on your shit list at the moment?

HARRISGBL, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK

There's so many fuckin' people. Number 1 on my shit list right now is Divine from Wu-Tang management. He took something major from me that he had no intention of giving back.

Tical 2000 predicted the apocalypse. How disappointed were you when the world didn't end?

FLAIR4AIR, QUEENS, NEW YORK

I was just playin' with it, boy. When



"I used to steal lollipops and sell them at school."



With costar Redman (right) in *How High*, 2001

the ball dropped in 1999, I was holding dough and champagne in my hands and holding my kids.

How High was great cinema.

Can you recommend three other stoner-movie classics?

SHARONTL 143, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Dazed and Confused — that one's good, with Ben Affleck, right? Cheech and Chong's *Up in Smoke*, and *Reefer Madness*.

André from Outkast has a new song with Norah Jones. Who's an unlikely

person you'd like to collaborate with?

HARD2TAP, EDISON, NEW JERSEY

Fiona Apple. That would be crazy. I haven't really heard her music, but she's aight! She's tight, and she's down to earth.

What's the most expensive thing that you've purchased since you became a big star?

CAVELLO, CAT, YONKERS, NEW YORK

My wedding and house were expensive, but the stupidest thing was this piece of jewelry [plays with his diamond-studded necklace]. It's a diamond ice pick, and it cost \$100,000. Custom from Jacob the Jeweler.

What do you think is going to happen to Kobe Bryant?

GOTALISMAN, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

They're gonna settle. I have sympathy for him, though: You're a superstar, you're a target. She's like, "I'll give you a little pussy; now I'm going to the cops." He has every reason to kick himself in the ass right now. Shit, I probably would've done the same shit in his shoes, but not that far — I wouldn't have dooked her in the dook chute! That's lame. [BLENDER]



Meth and Mary J. Blige at the 2003 MTV Awards



Just Like Heaven

It's "the best pop song **the Cure** have ever done," says Robert Smith — even though the band was falling apart, the keyboardist was so drunk he could hardly play and Smith gave the tune away to be the theme to a French TV show before the single was even released. . . .



THE CURE'S Robert Smith is his own harshest critic, so it must be noteworthy that by his exacting standards, "Just Like Heaven" stands as "the best pop song the Cure have ever done: All the sounds meshed, it was one take and it was perfect."

It's curious that a song so vibrantly uplifting was written when the Cure were virtually falling apart. Smith admits he was drinking heavily at the time, but keyboardist Lol Tolhurst, another founding member of the group, was far outstripping him in alcohol consumption, and before too long he would be ejected from the band.

"In 1987," Smith recalls, "my wife, Mary, and I lived in a small two-bedroom flat in North London. The other room was my music room. Just about the only discipline I had in my life was self-imposed. I set myself a regimen of writing 15 days a month; otherwise I'd have just got up in mid-afternoon and watched TV until the pubs opened, then gone out drinking."

Fortunately, he forced himself to stick to his writing schedule, and the idea that became "Just Like Heaven" emerged as a pattern of guitar chords and a melody, which he recorded as a demo by himself.

"I knew as soon as I'd written it that it was a good pop song," he says. "Although I didn't realize it at the time, the structure is very similar to 'Another Girl, Another Planet,' by the Only Ones, which I can still vividly remember hearing on the radio late at night in the mid-'70s. The main difference is that as the song progressed, I introduced some different chord changes, which give it that slightly melancholic feeling."

The track remained entirely instrumental when the Cure moved to a studio in the sun-kissed south of France to turn Smith's tape into a full-band demo. When Smith heard the rest of the group rehearsing the track, he was struck by the forcefulness of drummer Boris Williams's up-tempo patterns: "My demo was slower,

but I loved the way Boris did it. He introduced a drum fill that gave me the idea of introducing the instruments one by one before the vocal comes in."

Moving on to Studio Miraval, also in southern France, the Cure set to work on the tracks that would become the album *Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me*. First among them was "Just Like Heaven." "We were asked to provide a theme tune for a French TV show, *Les Enfants du Rock*, so I decided to give them the instrumental version of 'Just Like Heaven.' I already felt it was the most obvious single, and it meant that the music would be familiar to millions of Europeans even before it was released," Smith recalls.

It was in the rural seclusion of Miraval that the words started to come together, he adds. "I'd go outside every day and sit on my rug with a bottle of water and try to finish a lyric by 6 o'clock, at which point [bassist] Simon [Gallup] would come out with a pint of chilled Guinness — we brought our own supply — that would signify the bar was now open."

The intro line recalled his childhood, when Smith first enjoyed the thrill of baffling his friends by mastering a couple of basic magic tricks. "On one level, that's what 'Show me how you do that trick' is about, but on another, it's about a seduction trick, from much later in my life," he says. "It was something that happened on Beachy Head, on the south coast of England. The song is about hyperventilating — kissing and fainting to the floor. Mary dances with me in the video because she was the girl, so it had to be her. The idea is that one night like that is worth 1,000 hours of drudgery."

With the words completed, the finished track came together

VITAL STATISTICS

SONG
"Just Like Heaven"

ARTIST
The Cure

LABEL
Elektra

PERFORMERS
Robert Smith
guitar/vocals
Pork Thompson
guitar
Lol Tolhurst
keyboards
Simon Gallup
bass
Boris Williams
drums

PRODUCERS
Dave Allen,
Robert Smith

RELEASED
October 1987

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
40

WEEKS ON CHART
19



Hey, girls — what time do the Cure get here?

➤ "All the sounds meshed. It was one take, and it was perfect."



quickly, and, as Smith had correctly surmised, it was the most obvious single among the 37 songs they recorded in their two weeks at Miraval. They worked at this extraordinary rate even though, rumor has it, they drank 150 bottles of wine a week — plenty of it, no doubt, consumed by Tolhurst, who was by now drinking so much he was often unable to play.

Returning to the U.K., the Cure hooked up with their longtime video director Tim Pope, who produced what stands as the most rock-godlike video in the band's oeuvre, showing them perched atop a wind-blown cliff. "A song like that," Pope says, "is filled with joy. It's just marvelous, so people will always think it's a good video, whatever you do."

In the past, Smith has claimed that the video was shot in the exact location where the incident that inspired it took place, but he now

confesses that the bulk of it was filmed in a studio: "In 1985, we had made the video for 'Close to Me' with Tim at Beachy Head, so he already had some shots, like rocks falling into the sea and waves crashing on the beach, which he edited into the studio footage to make it look more realistic."

WHO'S WHO >>>



ROBERT SMITH

Iconic lipstick-smeared, soccer-loving, hard-drinking, highly literate founder and leader of the Cure.



MARY POOLE

Smith's childhood girlfriend, inspirational muse and wife of 15 years. White-draped costar of the "Just Like Heaven" video.



TIM POPE

Eccentric English pop-video director who graduated to Hollywood movie-making in 1996 with *The Crow*; *City of Angels*.



Stills from the "Just Like Heaven" video

Although "Just Like Heaven" stalled at number 40 on the *Billboard* singles chart, it provided the Cure, who had already been successful in the U.K. for a decade, with their first significant American hit, laying the foundation for 1989's "Love Song," which would take them from their familiar cult status to number 2 on the charts and establish them as a stadium-filling live act.

"Just Like Heaven" has also been recorded by various artists in Spanish, German and French. There's also a chamber-music version, performed by the Section String Quartet. Uppermost in Smith's affections, however, is Dinosaur Jr.'s 1989 underground-hit treatment.

"[Dinosaur leader] J. Mascis sent me a cassette, and it was so passionate. It was fantastic. I've never had such a visceral reaction to a cover version before or since."

Also a fan is Ben Folds, who covers another Cure song, "In Between Days," on his latest EP, *Speed Graphic*. "Just Like Heaven" holds up so well," Folds says. "It sounded so new and different at the time it came out, and usually things that seem so new when you first hear them die a horrible death. But everything about it — the songwriting, the music — is state of the art. It's as good as it gets. Anytime I hear it on the radio or a mix tape, I jump around like a freak." *JOHNNY BLACK*



SOLVING YOUR POP CONUNDRUMS SINCE 2001



Jim Carrey, after reading the reviews of *Bruce Almighty*

» Did I really see Guns N' Roses' Slash, Duff McKagan and Izzy Stradlin shooting a harpoon through the window of a boat in the 1988 Clint Eastwood movie *The Dead Pool*? There aren't too many other guys walking around in top hats and leather pants, so if that wasn't them, that's a huge-ass coincidence!

KYLE NUNWEILER, CALGARY, ALBERTA

No, you're right. Their uncredited appearance in the fifth and final *Dirty Harry* movie was filmed just prior to their international superstardom. The wharf scene was filmed on the San Francisco Drydock, with Slash deemed the most suitable harpoon shooter. Steven Adler and Axl Rose also appear with their bandmates in an earlier funeral scene.

The film is also notable for a youthful cameo from Jim (then James) Carrey as soon-to-be-murdered rock star Johnny Squares. The scene where he impersonates Axl Rose while atrociously lip-syncing Guns N' Roses' "Welcome to the Jungle" is really something.



Guns N' Roses, before Axl Rose had his pants surgically removed



Slash: Snoort!



Dog's-eye view of Brand New singer Jesse Lacey

Do the bands Brand New and Taking Back Sunday have a love-hate relationship? Brand New quote from one of TBS's lyrics in their song "Seventy Times Seven," and both songs discuss bad friendships.

RICK GRECH, VIA E-MAIL

Both "Seventy Times Seven" and Taking Back Sunday's "There's No I in Team" were written in response to a painful situation between Brand New singer Jesse Lacey and Taking Back Sunday guitarist John Nolan. The best friends grew up together in upstate New York but fell out over, well, guess what?

"It's basically about John and Jesse fighting over a girl, and one party realizing he was wrong and the other party realizing the other realized he was wrong," said Taking Back Sunday singer Adam Lazzara. "It was a messed-up situation that tore two really good friends apart."

"The words *best friends means friends forever*, from 'Seventy Times Seven,' was originally from our song, so we took the line from *their* song. It was a little bit devious on our part, I admit," Nolan added.

Sweetly, the former love rivals have made up and are

even considering working together. The whole episode shows one thing: Emo guys can't do beefs!

Is it true that Wings guitarist Jimmy McCulloch nearly shot Paul and Linda McCartney while they were sleeping?

KEITH BROOKES, VIA E-MAIL

Amazingly enough, yes. The young Scot was Wings' guitarist from 1974 to 1977, but his chronic alcoholism was always a problem (he died in 1979, just 26 years old).

During one visit to the McCartneys' Scottish farm, McCulloch loudly insulted his hosts, which caused Paul to grab him by the throat. McCulloch shouted, "Fuck you, you bastard. I'm

getting off your fuckin' shithole farm."

Bent on revenge, he visited the couple's bungalow later that night with a small .22-caliber nickel-plated handgun, and pointed it through an open window at the sleeping couple. Apparently, he changed his mind at the last moment.

Running away through nearby fields, he considered shooting himself but was distracted by the lights from a van belonging to his Wings colleague Denny Laine. "We've all had our moments, but Jimmy seemed to have more moments than anyone else," Laine noted.



What the hell is being said at the end of Prince's "Darling Nikki"?

KYLE SUNDGREN, BRENTWOOD, CALIFORNIA

The backward message on Prince's 1984 classic *Purple Rain* that begins after "Darling Nikki" is a play on the "Satanic masking" scares of the early '80s — but what's being said is, "Hello, how are you? I'm fine, 'cause I know that the Lord is coming soon, coming."

Given this righteous coda, it's a little ironic that some of the lyrics in "Darling Nikki" helped inspire the creation of the music-labeling pressure group PMRC when Tipper Gore became furious over the idea of a woman masturbating with a magazine. [BLENDER]



Wings: One of these men owns a handgun. Guess which.

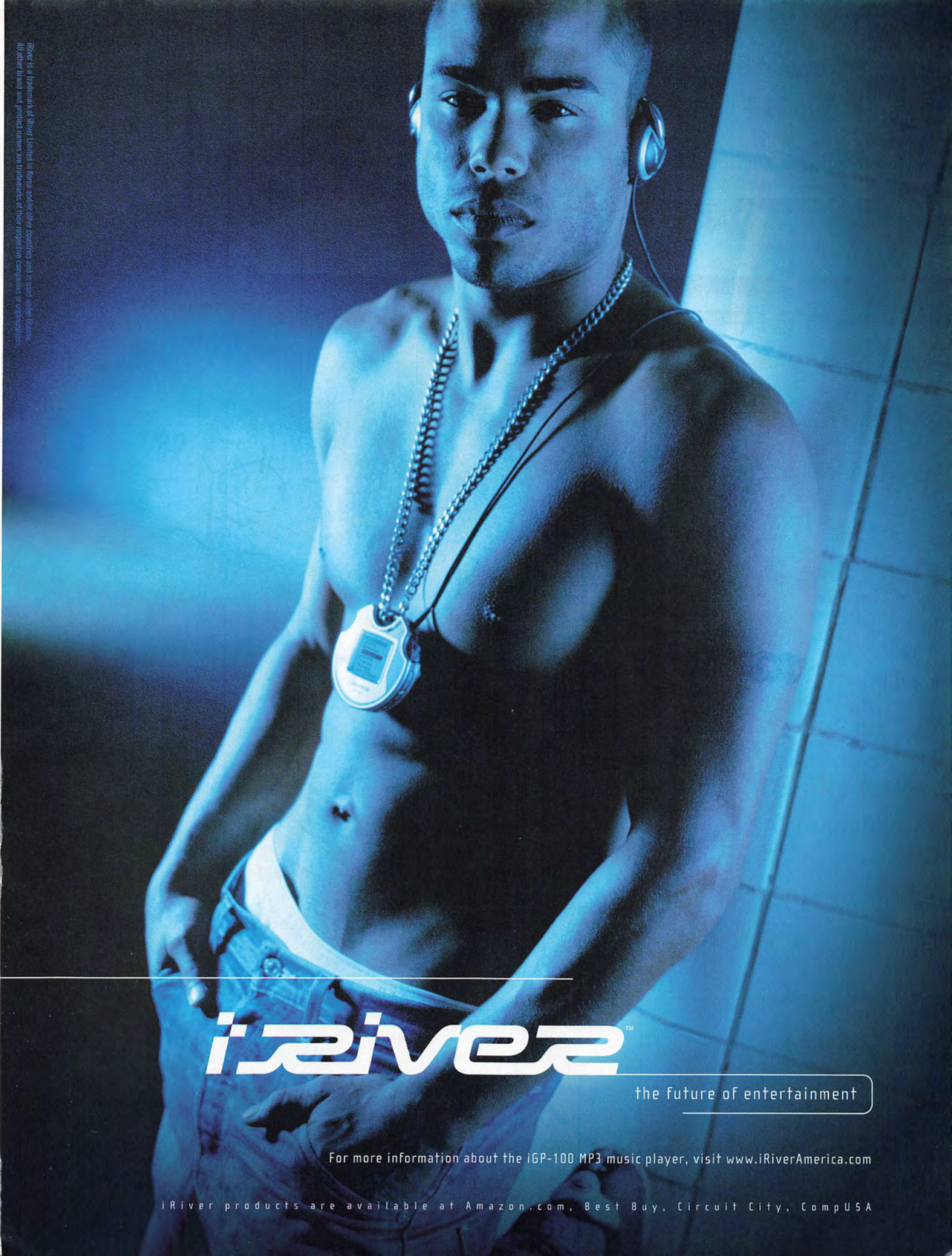
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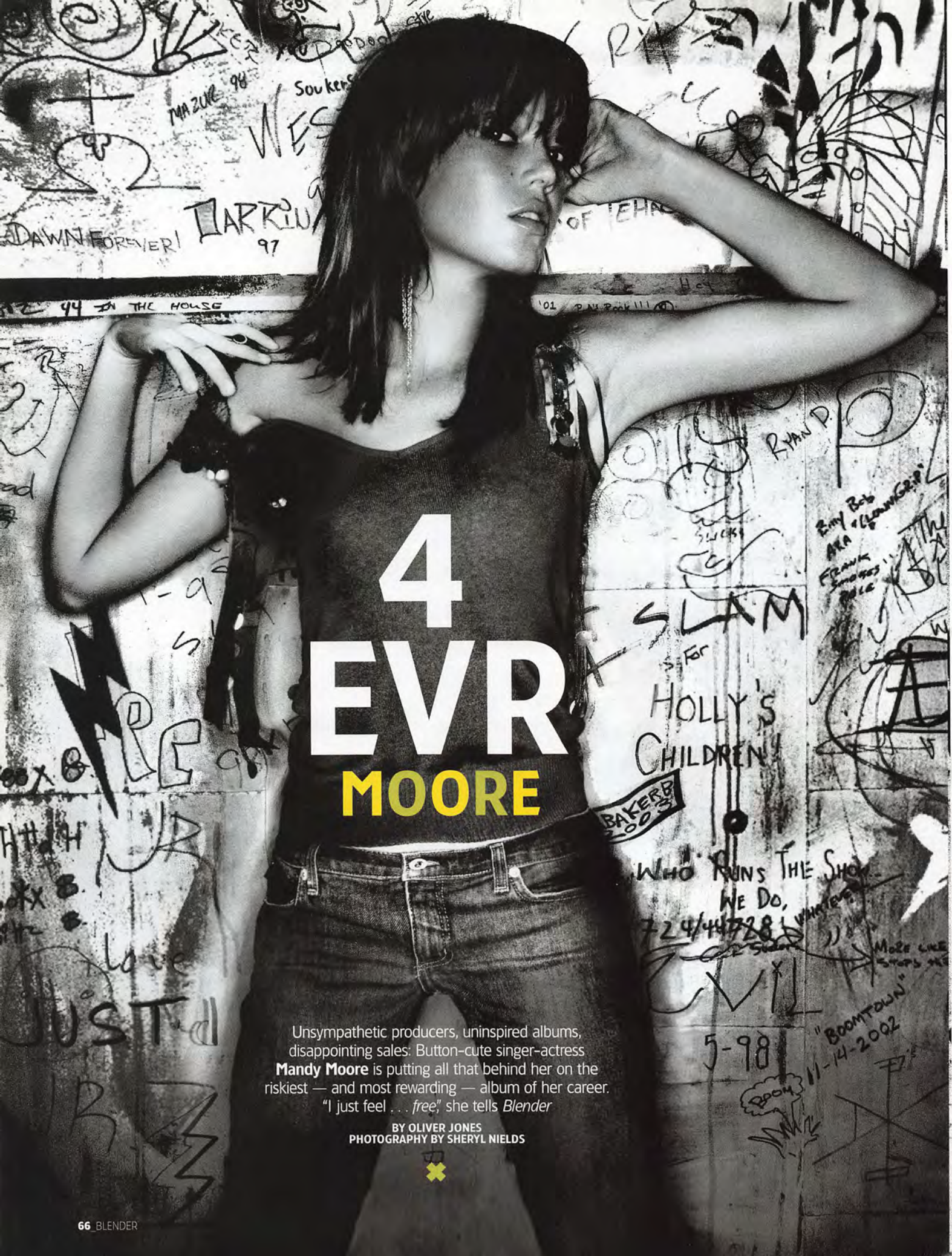


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4 EVR MOORE

Unsympathetic producers, uninspired albums, disappointing sales: Button-cute singer-actress **Mandy Moore** is putting all that behind her on the riskiest — and most rewarding — album of her career. "I just feel . . . free," she tells *Blender*

BY OLIVER JONES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHERYL NIELDS





TOP BY STELLA
MCCARTNEY FROM SAKS
FIFTH AVENUE BEVERLY
HILLS, JUCY COUTURE
JEANS TIGRE'S OWN
EARRINGS BY SHOWPONY

FIGHT
THE P



MANDY MOORE IS either a crappy bowler, incredibly sleepy or both. While her form is flawless — she takes graceful strides to the

line and pulls her arm back in a perfect arch — when she releases, her lime-green ball pops off her fingers with a duck snort and angles straight into the gutter.

With her second roll, she abandons the pretense of a windup and just pushes the thing forward. She turns, smiles, does a pirouette and kicks a triumphant leg in the air. Her satisfaction is tempered somewhat when she glances at the scoreboard at Hollywood's Lucky Strike lanes and sees that she's trailing two truly pitiful bowlers (full disclosure: *Blender* and our photographer), but she shrugs it off.

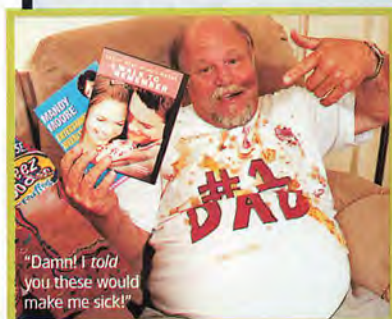
"It's like my mind and body have turned to mush," she says, laughing and shaking her head before burying her face in her hands.

That Moore can face impending defeat without sacrificing so much as a dollop of grace and good humor should be no surprise to anyone who has followed her music career. Since breaking on the scene four years ago in the great Orlando, Florida, teen-pop explosion that spawned Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake, the 19-year-old Moore has been the rare pop princess who values poise over perkiness. While this has been a boon to her acting career — Hollywood is still shaking its collective head at the unexpected success of her 2002 Christian-themed weepie, *A Walk to Remember* — it hasn't translated into much tangible music success.

THE
ARMCHAIR
CRITIC

Fat Dad™ Goes To the Movies!

Mandy Moore's teen melodramas are a big hit with high-school girls. But how about a more impartial judge? Like, say, crusty-but-lovable *Blender* dad and retired bus driver Pete Esposito. "Mandy Moore?" he growls between fistfuls of Chee-tos. "Never heard of her."



"Damn! I told you these would make me sick!"



Hey, someone's got to clean that, young lady.

She has notched only two chart-toppers: a limp bit of juvenilia called "Candy" ("I'd like to refund everyone who bought that album [*So Real*] their \$15.99," Moore declares. "We should have a gigantic nationwide bonfire!") and the marginally more listenable "I Wanna Be With You." Meanwhile, the album she had the most personally invested in, a sophisticated dance-pop record called simply *Mandy Moore*, failed to inspire much devotion when it was released two years ago.

"It's bummed me out, definitely," she says. "Especially with the last record,

such Baby Boomer fare as Cat Stevens's "Moonshadow," Carly Simon's "Anticipation" and Elton John's "Mona Lisas & Mad Hatters," as well as a smattering of '80s alterna-rock: Joan Armatrading's "Drop the Pilot," XTC's "Senses Working Overtime."

The onetime "Candy" girl has no fear of covering the works of rock's brightest lights. "I didn't make this record to draw comparisons to any of these artists," she says, pulling nervously on the hem of her retro-chic Mickey Mouse T-shirt. "They're just really great" — she lowers her voice to a murmur — "fuckin' songs."

which I am still really proud of. I was trying to branch out and do something different than the whole bubble-gum thing. And it was kind of like no one wanted that from me."

★★★★★

HER SOLUTION TO this problem couldn't be more unorthodox. Moore has persistently tried to distinguish herself from her teen cohorts, first by going brunette and now by covering Joni Mitchell. Her new album, *Coverage*, consists entirely of songs written by musicians whose halcyon days came long before Moore and her target audience were even born. Included is



A WALK TO REMEMBER (2002)

» THE GIST Mandy is the most unpopular girl in school — who opens the heart of the bad boy, enjoys a summer romance and then dies of leukemia.

FAT DAD SAYS "It's a tearjerker, all right. My favorite scene is when he gives her the new sweater. Very compassionate."

RATING



ALL I WANT (2002)

» THE GIST Elijah Wood is entangled in a love triangle with a photographer and Mandy's aspiring actress. Then he ditched Mandy for the other woman.

FAT DAD SAYS "I don't really get what happened. I don't know why the little guy would go with the other one if he's got Mandy. You don't date your neighbors."

RATING



HOW TO DEAL (2003)

» THE GIST Love-wary Mandy weathers a succession of trials: her parents' divorce, her sister's wedding and her best friend's pregnancy — and finally has a romance of her own.

FAT DAD SAYS "It's a bunch of bullshit."

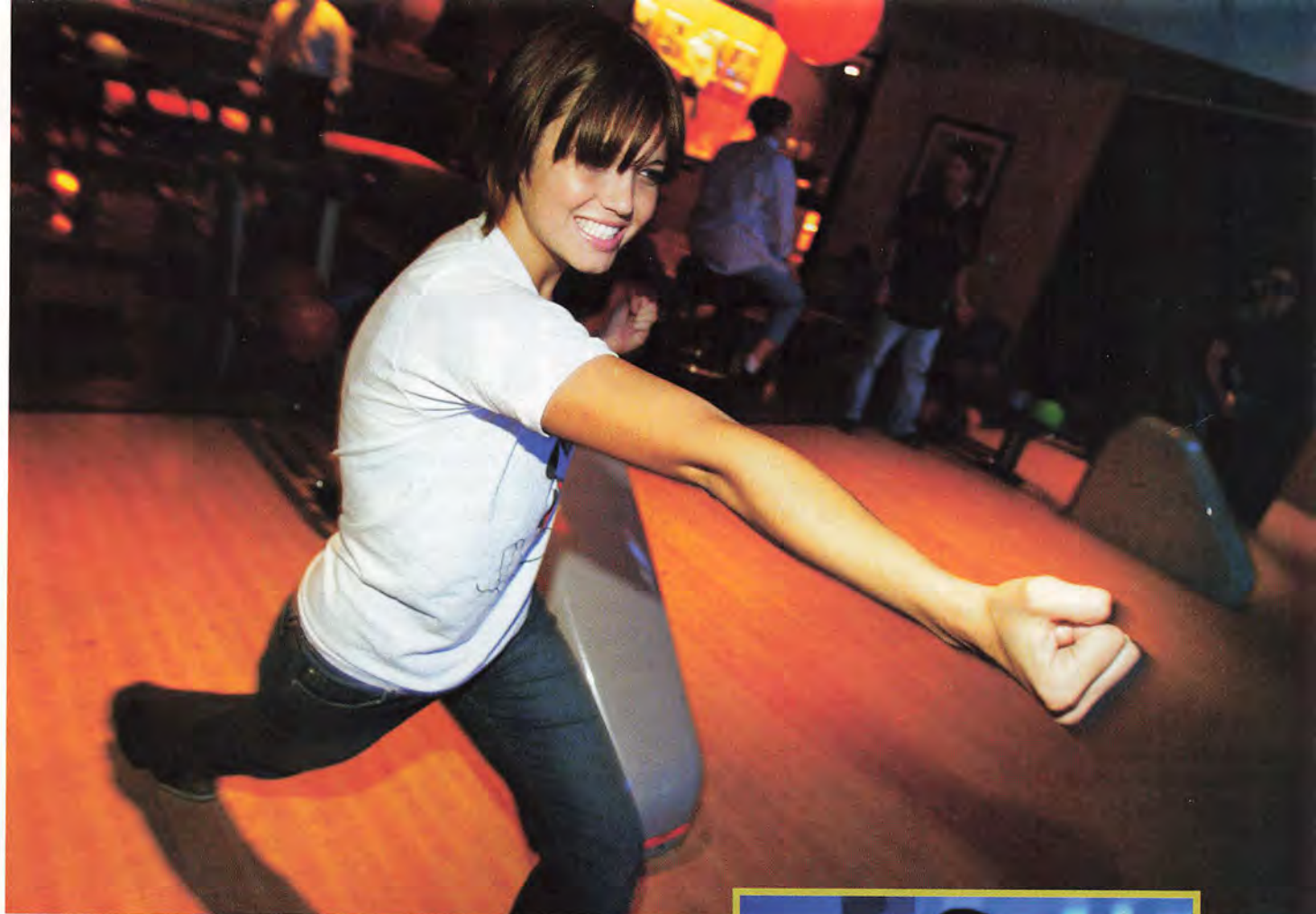
RATING



I like that mole she has.



Styling: Turney & Leal for Artists by Timothy Plante; Mandy Moore: make-up: Melissa Washington for Celestineagency.com; hair: Colleen Conway for Celestineagency.com; manicure: Melissa Washington for Celestineagency.com. This page: Sheryl Nields (Moore), Sarah Colleen (Esposito), Zuma Press/Narzom (A Walk to Remember, How to Deal), The Kobal Collection (All I Want)



Poised neatly between karaoke and tribute, *Coverage* succeeds thanks to Moore's fine taste in songs and pleasingly game voice. Recording the album in a "super-lax" manner at a converted garage in Minneapolis also helped give Moore a surprisingly much-needed boost of confidence.

"I was 14 years old the first time I ever stepped into a studio," she explains. "I worked with a really terrible man who made me feel bad about myself and doubt my vocal ability. So going into any recording studio has always been a drag for me. I've had no self-confidence. I've always felt like crap. But with *Coverage*, I broke through that barrier. Making this record is the first time that I feel — I don't want to sound cheesy, but I just feel free. I could make mistakes and not have someone say, 'See, I told you that you were terrible.' I could be creative. I could have fun."

In person, Moore is as unguarded as pop stars come. She's the girl in high school who's friends with every clique, including the jocks. While bowling, Moore keeps nervously text-messaging her parents, who are courtside at Flushing Meadows in New York watching tennis star Andy Roddick, Moore's

↑ You should see her reaction when she actually knocks a pin over.

boyfriend of a year, dispatch a bellyaching Croatian on his way to the U.S. Open title.

She readily admits that the relationship has garnered more ink than her music. "Andy's a cool guy, and if I were a girl I would want to know about what's going on in his life, too," Moore says. "He's even a better dancer than me. I'm totally uncoordinated, and when he wants to, he can dance like

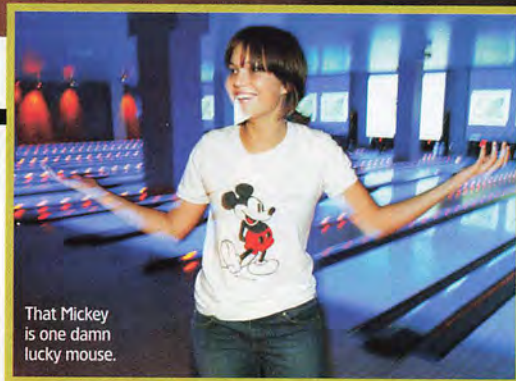
Justin Timberlake. But not me — I have no rhythm and no soul."

What she does have, according to Roger Ebert in his review of this year's teen melodrama *How to Deal*, is "natural,

unaffected charm," an attribute Moore couldn't conceal if she tried.

"Her genius is in always being sympathetic no matter what she's doing onscreen," says director Brian Dannelly, who cast Moore as an over-the-top Christian zealot in the dark comedy *Saved*, the first of three films Moore has coming out in the next year. "The character she plays is pretty despicable, but Mandy's natural warmth makes her palatable."

"I'd like to refund everyone who bought my *So Real* CD their \$15.99."



That Mickey is one damn lucky mouse.

★★★★★

IT TURNS OUT that Moore is indeed a bit sleepy, and she's an extremely crappy bowler (her final score: 40). She barely restrains a yawn as she returns her rental shoes to the counter. *Blender* wonders if she was out late the night before tearing up Young Hollywood with the Hilton Sisters. Moore shoots us a look and snorts.

"The whole club scene is so ugghhhh," she exclaims, shuddering as if she had just picked up a virulent strain of cooties. "I don't like it at all. I've been out to [clubs] a couple of times, and they gave me the heebie-jeebies."

So what's the best part of being a pop star, then?

"The best part of the job is the job," she answers calmly. "I'm 19 and doing all this. As long as I get to go onstage, and I have a bottle of water and some food in my stomach, I'm happy." [BLENDER]

PAGING DR. FREUD! >>>>>>

ROCK STAR SELF-PORTRAITS



→ What are rock stars *really* like? Happy? Angry? Depressed? Do they miss their mommies? What better way to find out than to commission 10 musicians' self-portraits — and get a leading psychologist to analyze their work? Prepare yourself for some genuinely harrowing results . . .

BY STEVE KANDELL

DR. LESLIE AUSTIN, PH.D., has been a practicing behavioral psychotherapist and executive coach in New York for 13 years.



WAYNE COYNE

AGE 42

SEX Male

OCCUPATION "Sorcerer, puppeteer, musician with the Flaming Lips."

RESIDENCE Oklahoma City

MARITAL STATUS "Married, common law."

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "Previous paranoid."



DR. LESLIE AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"The conventional interpretation of this picture would be that the artist sees himself as a martyr and needs serious help. But he may actually simply see himself as misunderstood, with a gift to give others. He has gone through struggles in his life but is not giving up on the idea that he still has something to offer, even in this savage state. He would benefit greatly from some sort of spiritualism to balance himself out."

VANESSA CARLTON

AGE 23

SEX "Definitely female."

OCCUPATION "Ex-waitress, presently operating as a poster child for piano teachers far and wide."

RESIDENCE "My heart is in San Francisco; my lungs are in NYC."

MARITAL STATUS Single

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "Self-diagnosed with ADD. On and off Prozac for a few years. But now I solely rely on guidance from my dog."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"In the picture, the v is obscuring her eyes, which are closed anyway, but the c accentuates an open mouth. This is what is called a 'high auditory' person, relating to the world through sound — she prefers not to look out into the world, focusing instead on reacting to outside influences. She exhibits traits of being schizoid, or not fully connected to her own body. This may give the appearance of being vacant, but she may in fact be very spiritual."

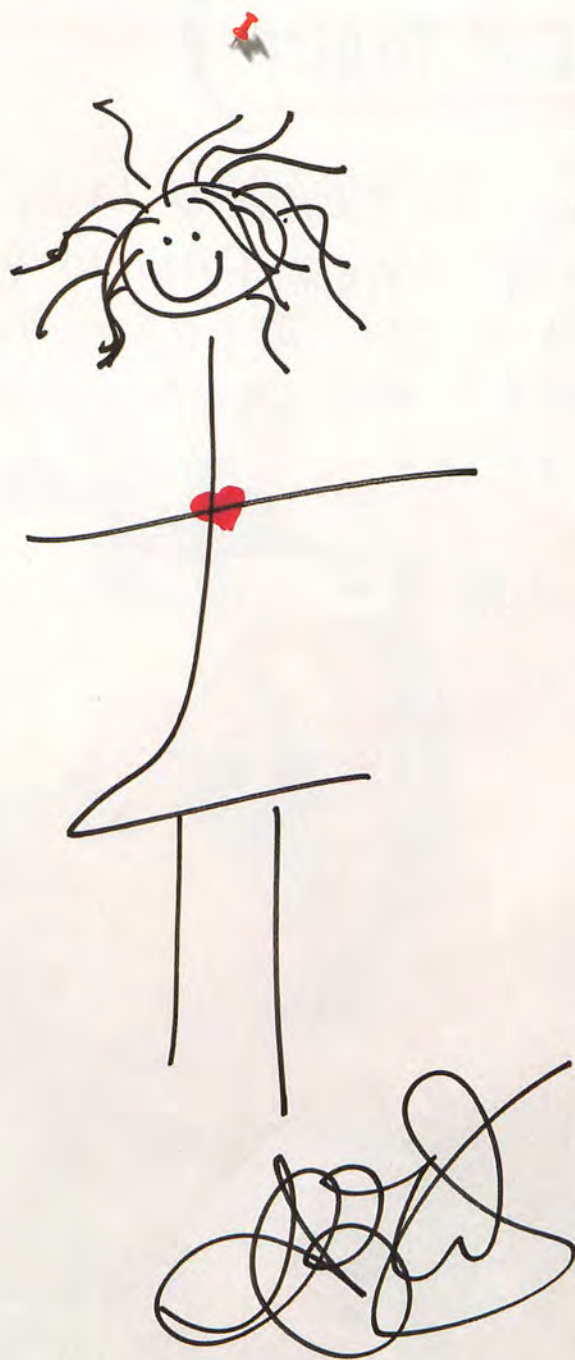
WAYNE (SELF PORTRAIT)

MYSELF ^{AFTER} BEING BEHEADED WHILE
I WAS SLEEPING THEN HAVING MY
SEVERED HEAD PUT ON A POST IN
THE GARDEN WHERE THE HUMMING BIRDS
CAN FEED OUT OF MY NOSTRILS...





ROCK STAR SELF-PORTRAITS



ALANIS MORISSETTE

AGE 29

SEX "Female, but with a lot of stereotypically male qualities."

OCCUPATION "Writer, performer, artist, activist, etc."

RESIDENCE Los Angeles

MARITAL STATUS "I think it's a great idea; haven't done it yet."

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "Check out my lyrics — it's all there."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"The stick figure with the line missing on the right side makes her appear incomplete, and the cross may mean that she feels crucified for having taken certain public positions. She may have enjoyed great success earlier in her life, but right now, she's focusing on finding her heart. There's a fairly recent sense of peace, and it seems as though she's going through a really good time right now."



"This is intense — he has the potential for self-destruction."



CHI CHENG

AGE 33

SEX Male

OCCUPATION Bassist, the Deftones

RESIDENCE Sacramento, California

MARITAL STATUS Single

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "Don't you think the picture speaks for itself?"



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"This is pretty intense — you've got alcohol, a broken heart, a gun at the head and a woman sitting on his face. But it's all a little cartoonish and cliché; he's not quite as tough as he portrays himself. He has the potential for self-destruction, but he's more likely to hurt someone out of reaction rather than initiation. He wouldn't hesitate to do whatever he feels like. He has pushed the edge in most areas of his life, and self-awareness may be his saving grace."



JUSTIN BECK

AGE 25

SEX Male

OCCUPATION "Forklift driver; guitarist, Glassjaw."

RESIDENCE New York City

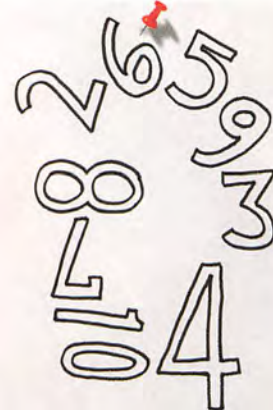
MARITAL STATUS Single

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "I have ADD, and I think I'm dyslexic."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"He clearly has a wicked sense of humor and is having a good time. The huge smile and the emphasis on the mouth hints that he's a singer or plays saxophone or trumpet. People can't push him around, but he's not really a tough guy, either. He's white? That's very funny — this may be how he's representing his music, as soulful!"



HUNTER

AGE 27

SEX Male

OCCUPATION Bassist, A.F.I.

RESIDENCE Oakland, California

MARITAL STATUS Single

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "Incomplete."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"The hidden face shows someone who will never be obvious about who he is and will need to be decoded. He's a joker with an ironic sense of humor, but he also has a sense of order about the world and about life — numbers represent logic. He's an anamorphic type. You have to get them at just the right angle to understand them."

RYAN MILLER

AGE 30

SEX Male

OCCUPATION Singer-songwriter, Guster

RESIDENCE New York City

MARITAL STATUS "Not."

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "I was sent to a shrink in sixth grade because I was lazy and didn't want to go to school."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"The Etch A Sketch is a clever idea, but it also indicates an inflated sense of self. The eyes are complex but not filled out, and he seems unaware that he's looking at the world with only half a view. He's brash and narcissistic and emotionally raw, but he's on the right path and will get better with age if he doesn't destroy himself first."



LEONA NAESS

AGE "None of your business."

SEX "Yes, please."

OCCUPATION Singer

RESIDENCE "New York, London, Middle America."

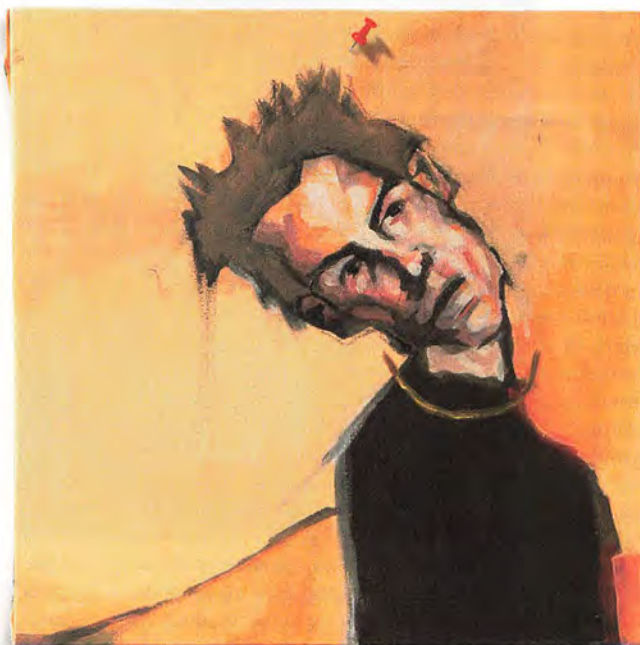
MARITAL STATUS "No, thanks."

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "Are we all not crazy?"



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"She reminds me of the '40s actress Veronica Lake — she hides her eye behind her hair and is mysterious and sultry. It's hard to tell what she really looks like, since she writes that she looks like someone else. She misleads people and tweaks people's perceptions. She's sensual but always keeps a part of herself hidden."



SHAWN CHRISTENSEN

AGE 25

SEX "Yes."

OCCUPATION Singer and guitarist for StellaStarr*

RESIDENCE New York City

MARITAL STATUS "It's not looking good."

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "I was socially mute for the first eight years of my life."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"This person shows a real artistic talent and refined sensibility. The crooked neck displays a disjointed, difficult way of looking at the world, and he may have traits of anhedonia, or the inability to feel joy. This doesn't look like a noose; it's more of a choker collar that cuts off the head from the heart and body. The bright background indicates a sunny side, but he wouldn't feel comfortable expressing that. He's not quite as dark as he presents himself — that's his secret."



M. SHAWN CRAHAN

AGE 33

SEX Male

OCCUPATION "Drummer and backing vocalist for To My Surprise, and custom percussionist for Slipknot"

RESIDENCE Des Moines, Iowa

MARITAL STATUS Married

PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY "I am completely normal."



DR. AUSTIN'S DIAGNOSIS

"I wouldn't be surprised if this person has experienced some real psychic splits or has substance-abuse issues. He or she exhibits profoundly low self-esteem, which is fortunately compensated by narcissism. If not literally suicidal, the person constantly questions why he or she is here." [BLENDER]

Johnny Cash

1932-2003

➔ He barnstormed with Elvis, befriended convicts, mentored Dylan, antagonized Nashville, sang murder ballads before Eminem was born and never wasted a moment choosing an outfit. He was the Man in Black, and he was as great as they come

BY PHIL SUTCLIFFE



JOHNNY CASH, the legendary singer and songwriter who for 50 years helped define American country, folk and rock & roll music, died in Nashville on September 12 of respiratory failure following a series of illnesses. He was 71.

With his craggy face and earth-tremor bass-baritone voice, Cash was one of America's musical monuments. Although he spent a lifetime offending the establishment and remained one of rock's true rebel spirits, he was always a passionate Christian. Rarely allowing religious aspiration to deflect him from reality's harshness, though, he sang for saints, sinners and everyone in between, showing that an artist could stake out strong moral ground and remain improbably hip.

He picked up his share of awards, most notably induction into both the Country Music Hall of Fame (1980) and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1992), an honor he shared with only his Sun Records labelmate Elvis Presley. Over the last decade, Cash had enjoyed a recording renaissance via his quartet of stark, uncompromised albums on the American label. From his first national hit, 1956's "I Walk the Line," through this year's much-lauded cover of Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt," Cash proved himself the most durable working survivor of the original rock & roll era and, through his depth and longevity, perhaps the sole contender to Hank Williams's designation as the greatest country artist of all time.

As a chronicler of the national story from the 1930s through the new millennium as seen and felt by working people, the poor and downtrodden, Cash



is equally worthy of comparison to Woody Guthrie, John Ford and Edward Hopper, other artists who came to define the best of American values.

One of Ray and Carrie Cash's six children, John R. Cash was born into the Great Depression on February 26, 1932, in Kingsland, Arkansas. He claimed that he wore black onstage to show solidarity with the suffering he had seen since he

started picking cotton when he was just a 5-year-old boy.

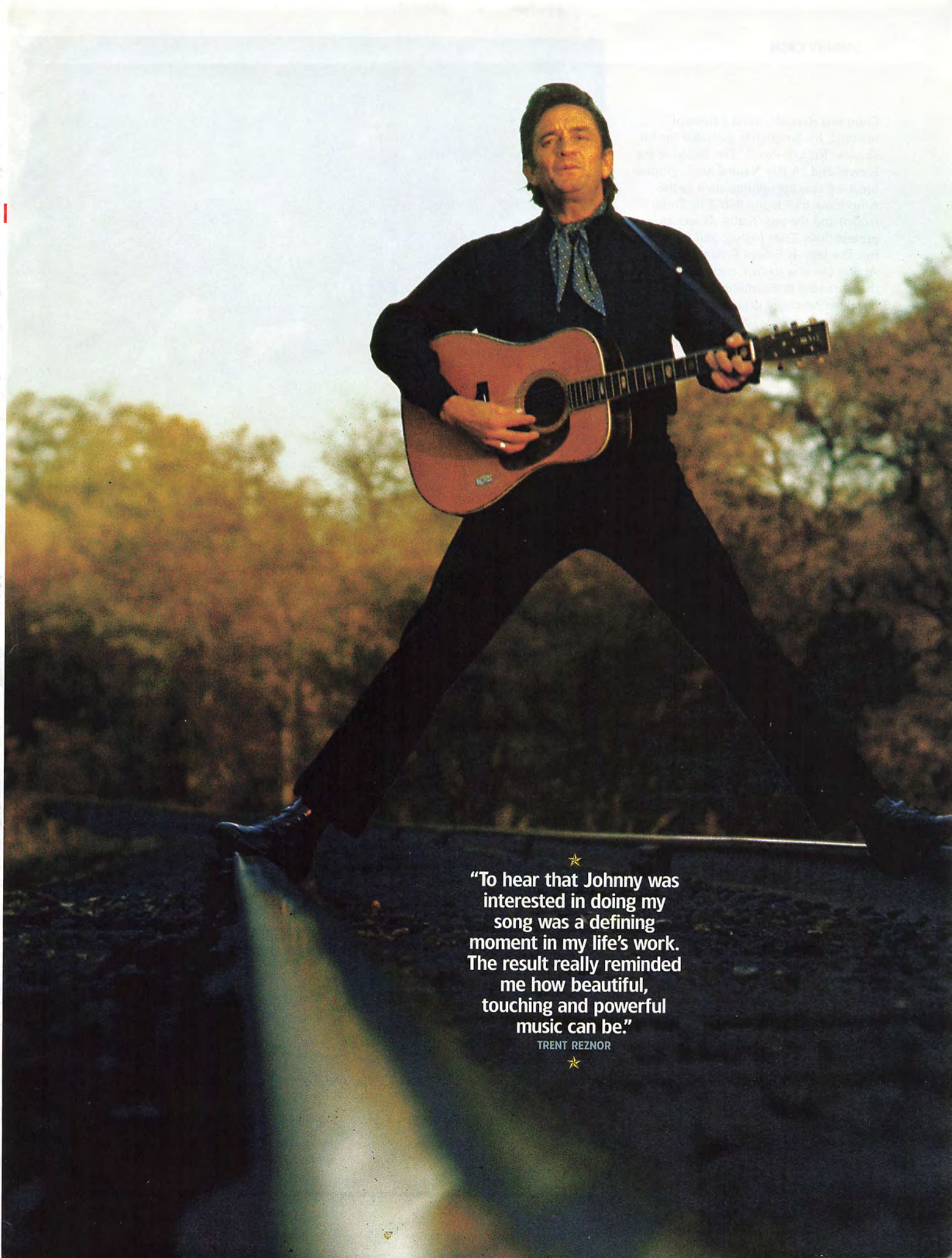
In 1935, the family moved to a New Deal farm project near Dyess in northeastern Arkansas, gaining security in exchange for the hard labor of reclaiming Mississippi swampland (Cash later recalled the great flood of 1937 in his song "Five Feet High and Rising"). But this period of grueling toil was marked by the tragedy that Cash, in an enthralling autobiography he wrote in his sixties, still described as his "deepest darkness." When Johnny was 12, his "big brother and hero" Jack, two years older, died after a horrific accident with a rotary saw in his high-school carpentry workshop.

As a boy, Cash did some singing locally, but he developed his blunt guitar style while serving in the United States Air Force in Germany from 1951 to 1954. On his return, he moved to Memphis and married Vivian Liberto (their four daughters are all singers, of whom Rosanne is the best known), making a living selling electrical appliances door-to-door. In 1955, he took his songs and what proved to be his lifetime band, the Tennessee Two (later Three), to Elvis Presley's mentor, Sam Phillips of Sun Records. With their basic, galloping "boom-chicka-boom" sound, they started racking up country hits: "I Walk the Line," "Folsom Prison Blues" and the pop crossover "Ballad of a Teenage Queen."

Cash left Sun Records in 1958 when Phillips refused to let him make gospel records. Over the next 27 years with

★
"He was an American icon
who set the standard
for how to make music on
your own terms."
★

TIM MCGRAW



★
"To hear that Johnny was
interested in doing my
song was a defining
moment in my life's work.
The result really reminded
me how beautiful,
touching and powerful
music can be."

TRENT REZNOR



Columbia Records, amid a flood of material, his landmarks included the hit singles "Ring of Fire," "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" and "A Boy Named Sue"; groundbreaking concept albums such as the Americana travelogue *Ride This Train* (1960) and the pro-Native American protest *Bitter Tears* (1964); and the seismic live sets *At Folsom Prison* (1968) and *At San Quentin* (1969), outlaw manifestos that garnered international acclaim.

Cash never did get along with the Nashville in-crowd. The least of their disagreements was his temporary ban from the Grand Ole Opry for angrily kicking out stage footlights one night in 1965. His espousal of liberal causes — Native American rights, his anti-Vietnam War stance, AIDS-awareness campaigns — always set him apart from the country mainstream. So did regular breaches of rhinestone-cowboy musical conventions, such as his contributions to Bob Dylan's *Nashville Skyline* — a duet on "Girl From the North Country" and his Grammy-winning liner notes ("This man can rhyme the tick of time").

Dylan returned the seal of approval in 1969 by appearing on the premiere of Cash's ABC television show, which later featured Joni Mitchell, Mahalia Jackson, the Who and Louis Armstrong.

Cash's record sales slumped in the 1980s, although ganging up with Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson as the Highwaymen in 1985 was an exception. He finally reasserted his standing as a peerless singer and songwriter after his 1993 move to rap-

At home with wife June Carter Cash, 1969



metal guru Rick Rubin's American label.

The four albums Cash recorded with Rubin combined his old-timey sound and increasingly fragile baritone with songs, sacred and profane, from across the ages:

traditionals, Hank Williams, new writing by Cash himself, versions of songs by U2, Depeche Mode and Nine Inch Nails (this year's stunning video for his cover of "Hurt" now seems an apt farewell document). Before his death, Cash and Rubin were planning a five-disc box set combining unreleased material and a best-of selection for a pre-Christmas release.

Cash was a man of immense grace, but he never mellowed. When *Unchained* won the Best Country Album Grammy in 1998, he bought a full-page ad in the trade magazine *Billboard* in which he sarcastically topped his message thanking "the Nashville music establishment and

JOHNNY CASH HIS GREATEST CDs



JOHNNY CASH WITH HIS HOT AND BLUE GUITAR

SUN, 1957

★★★★

Sun's first release ever. Cash, just 25, sings as old as the hills — and looks oddly like Rock Hudson on the sleeve. Featuring his own "I Walk the Line" and "Folsom Prison Blues," plus Leadbelly, Jerry Reed and Hank Williams covers.



AT SAN QUENTIN (THE COMPLETE 1969 CONCERT)

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2000

★★★★★

Volcanic. Prisoners "have their hearts torn out," Cash reckoned. It sounds as if he did too, wild-eyed and shuddering at the oppression of the walls. The crowd is a 1,000-strong caged animal. The reissue, with nine extra tracks, surpasses the vinyl original.



AMERICAN RECORDINGS

AMERICAN, 1994

★★★★★

A long black coat and short black songs set the tone as producer Rick Rubin restores the redoubtable veteran. Pitch-black highlights include Cash's own "Delia's Gone" and Leonard Cohen's "Bird on a Wire." A demons-versus-angels slugfest. Brutal.



LOVE, GOD, MURDER

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2000

★★★★★

A compact career overview via three CDs compiled and themed by Cash himself to cover his Big Subjects in concentrated form. Buying separately? *Love* is more real than romantic and *God* is no laughing matter, but *Murder* is the killer.



AMERICAN IV: THE MAN COMES AROUND

AMERICAN, 2002

★★★★

Shaky and unsentimental, Cash laments the world's pain ("Hurt"), sings wife June a last love song ("The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face") and bids adieu via "We'll Meet Again" and the cheery refrain of the misanthropic "Sam Hall": "I hate you all!" PHIL SUTCLIFFE

country radio for your support" with the famous *San Quentin* shot of him ferociously giving the camera the finger.

Through it all, what he loved best, aside from gospel songs, was the harsh laughter of tales like "Joe Bean" ("He killed 20 men by the age of 10; he was an unruly kid") and "Folsom Prison Blues." "I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die," his most famous line, came from "trying to think up the worst reason a person could have for killing another person," he said.

Though he was a mountain of a man, his health was always precarious. What he called his "all-consuming addiction" to amphetamines began in the late '50s. He left his family, and in 1966 his first wife filed for divorce. He was never imprisoned, but he was arrested seven times and wrecked innumerable cars. Once, notoriously, he set fire to a tract of land in the Los Padres National Wildlife Refuge in Southern California when his truck blew up on the side of the road.

After a brief flirtation with suicide — in 1967, a desperate Cash crawled into a cave in the Tennessee mountains, fixing to die — he got his life back on track. He renewed his Christian faith, and in March 1968, he married June Carter, of country music's legendary Carter Family (the family had joined Cash's troupe a few years earlier, and later, Johnny and June's only child, John, would often play with his parents' band).

June Carter Cash thus began what Johnny called her "lifelong dedication to cleaning me up." For the most part, he responded, save a couple of later lapses with painkillers (one the result of being attacked by an ostrich). She remained his love and guiding light into old age, when he endured heart surgery, diabetes and, in 1997, a form of Parkinson's disease.

Carter Cash died at age 73 this past May. Cash took her death hard.

For American music, the loss of Johnny Cash is like a piece of Mount Rushmore breaking off and falling into the valley below. But his own modest hope for himself had long been realized: that God "might possibly use me to influence somebody for the good, if I can see the opportunities through the smokescreen of my own ego." [BLENDER]

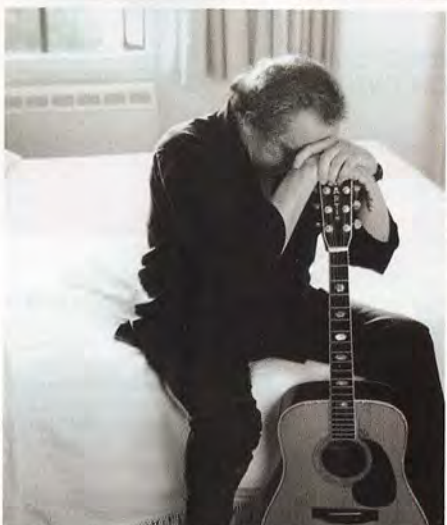
★
"Our challenge is to listen to music with the same passion and emotion he put into making it."
★

RICK RUBIN



★
"He was an original — as a rock artist and as a country artist. He was always a good man, a good friend. We were both wild and crazy in our younger days and shared a lot of good times and bad. No matter how wasted I was, I could depend on him!"
★

GEORGE JONES



↑ AMERICAN IDOL

Clockwise from top: Cash hears the train a-comin', 1969; live at Cummins Prison Farm, Cummins, Arkansas, 1969; Hank Williams Jr. (center) and Kid Rock (right) arrive for Cash's funeral, September 15; the man and his guitar, 1996; a renewed Cash readies for his comeback, 1992

LUST! VANITY! PRE-NUPS!

THE **50**

HOTTEST ROCK & ROLL COUPLES OF ALL TIME



➔ They have titanic egos, drug problems, public fights and quite often plastic-surgery obsessions — but hey, at least they're in love! Why do so many musicians choose other stars to be their better halves? And out of all the adoring, crazy or just plain disastrous matches, which is the greatest?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BY JOHN AIZLEWOOD, JANE BUSSMAN, JOHNNY DAVIS, STEVE KANDELL, BEN MITCHELL AND JONAH WEINER



50
**JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE
AND CAMERON DIAZ**
(2003–)

HE Aqua-fresh popster turned dirtty
SHE Good-time Charlie's Angel turned Mrs. Robinson
HOT BECAUSE Diaz is 31 — and she's not Britney. Post-Spears, Timberlake said he wanted "Somebody like [my mother]. Somebody that understands me, somebody that understands the things that I go through." In keeping with the *Modern Maturity* vibe, Timberlake sometimes takes Diaz golfing. In keeping with his official new bad-boy image, he makes a point of being seen in grimy clubs with her, (outrageously!) drinking bourbon from the bottle. And they're both excellent dancers.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Tadpoling is 5,000 five minutes ago.



49
**GENE SIMMONS AND
SHANNON TWEED**
(1984–)

HE Lascivious Kiss bassist
SHE *Playboy* Playmate of the Year, 1982
HOT BECAUSE This is why men form bands. Simmons has claimed to have slept with 4,000 women, but with Kiss's career on the slide, the fire-breathing lothario cashed in just before his celebrity gave out and settled down with Tweed, a *Playboy* Playmate and aspiring actress. Tweed went on to star in more than 60 movies, including *Indecent Behavior III* and *Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death*. Kiss just went on. Tweed and Simmons are apparently rock-solid throughout 19 years and two kids — but no wedding.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Gene Simmons: Would you?

48
**DAVID GEST AND
LIZA MINNELLI** (2001–2003)
HE Botox-faced, not-gay TV producer
SHE Botox-faced singer/gay icon
HOT BECAUSE Together, they were the last word in camp. Their wedding photos look like a Madame Tussaud's display — Donald Trump, Elizabeth Taylor, Michael Jackson and Mickey Rooney all attended.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Even by Minnelli's standards, a 16-month marriage is really only a honeymoon plus tax.



47
**SIMON AND
YASMIN LE BON** (1984–)
HE Old New Romantic
SHE Iranian/British model
HOT BECAUSE They were the '80s.
NOT HOT BECAUSE The Duran Duran reunion may not be all about the music. "I'm down to my wife's last million," Simon admits.



46
**MICHAEL HUTCHENCE
AND KYLIE MINOGUE**
(1989–1991)

HE Leather-trousered self-asphyxiator
SHE Fun-size pop minx
HOT BECAUSE They were the two biggest stars Down Under at the time of their high-profile affair. He went upstairs with a virginal teen pop star on his arm and returned a few weeks later trailing a sexed-up diva in hot pants. "Everything I know about sex, I learned from Michael," Minogue said. She claimed to be "embarrassed" when British customs officials fished a pair of handcuffs from her luggage. The relationship took her career into a new phase that endures today and added a new dimension to his reputation as a priapic sexual warlock.
NOT HOT BECAUSE People who really do it a lot don't talk about it that much.

Justin Timberlake's faked
drowning once again
had the desired results.



→ Diaz, 31, and her tadpole Timberlake are Hollywood's hottest new couple.



Kate Hudson and Chris Robinson: At least one of these people is probably stoned.

45 CHRIS ROBINSON AND KATE HUDSON (2000-)

HE Perpetually gaunt Black Crowes
SHE Perpetually pert daughter of Goldie Hawn

HOT BECAUSE Proof that sometimes even a marginal rock star can get hitched to a hot actress. With the Black Crowes on permanent hiatus, Hudson keeps Robinson in the public eye. For Hudson, married life means never having to look far for a good bag of weed.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Ever get the sense that Hudson might have taken her *Almost Famous* groupie role a bit too seriously?



44 RICHIE SAMBORA AND HEATHER LOCKLEAR (1994-)

HE Uncomplicated Bon Jovi axman
SHE Actress, professional Valley Girl

HOT BECAUSE After *Dynasty* and *T.J. Hooker*, rock-star collector Locklear's *Melrose Place* career comeback gave her a shot at winning someone half-decent to settle down with. Cher's ex-boyfriend Sambora, though his *Slippery When Wet* heyday was behind him, was still a face in AOR stadium circles. In Sambora, Locklear found a less threatening version of her first husband, Tommy Lee. In Locklear, Sambora found someone with hair similar to his own. A blueprint for the A-list rock sideman's relationship. They're now happily married with a kid.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Sambora spends more time on his hair than she does.



43 FABRIZIO MORETTI AND DREW BARRYMORE (2002-)

HE Swarthy Strokes drummer
SHE Hollywood wild child

HOT BECAUSE Barrymore and (insert celebrity name here) are always a draw. But youthful percussionist Moretti is the first Drew score where *he's* as foxy as she is — her last rock boyfriend, for example, was Hole's Eric Erlandson. Her newly minted career as a movie producer may have made her wealthy, but money can't buy the Strokes' thrift-store hipness, which rubs off on Barrymore as she logs time backstage at rock festivals. Meanwhile, scruffy Fab gets fast-tracked down the red carpet at the Oscars. Eat your heart out, Julia.

NOT HOT BECAUSE He is only the drummer.



42 NICK LACHEY AND JESSICA SIMPSON (2001-)

HE Newlywed, squeaky-clean singer in C-list boy band
SHE Newlywed, squeaky-clean, Barbie-bodied singer

HOT BECAUSE With their image and storybook wedding, they come off like made-for-TV characters... hey, wait!

NOT HOT BECAUSE There's nothing less rock & roll than married Christians.



41 JERRY LEE LEWIS AND MYRA GALE BROWN (1957-1970)

HE Had great balls of fire
SHE His second cousin. His 13-year-old second cousin

HOT BECAUSE When the two of them got divorced, Brown claimed they had spent just three nights of their 13-year marriage apart.

NOT HOT BECAUSE She was 13 years old, for Chrissakes.

40 PRINCE AND KIM BASINGER (1989)

HE Contrarian prankster of funk
SHE "Chronically shy" centerfold siren

HOT BECAUSE Generous observers said she made him Hollywood and he made her street. Post-ling, both mysteriously suffered career free-fall.

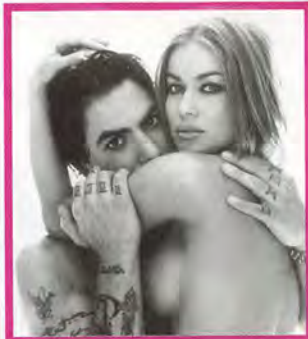
NOT HOT BECAUSE The unforgettable Prince lyric "It's getting warm in here/Let's go in the bedroom/What's in there?/A window."

39 DAVE PIRNER AND WINONA RYDER (1993-1995)

HE Nappy-haired Soul Asylum singer
SHE Sticky-fingered starlet

HOT BECAUSE No less an authority than Courtney Love has said, "You're no one in music until you have a feud with me or sleep with Winona."

NOT HOT BECAUSE Pirner never got a WINONA FOREVER tattoo.



38 DAVE NAVARRO AND CARMEN ELECTRA (2000-)

HE The Derek Zoolander of rock
SHE Actress, model, etc.

HOT BECAUSE The busty *Baywatch* star met the Jane's Addiction guitarist on a blind date set up by her hairdresser, and though she claimed to be "healing" after the end of her six-month marriage to Dennis Rodman, she decided the time was right to start dating again. Navarro, a recovering heroin addict and former advocate of complication-free sex with hookers, seemed like a safer bet. Separately, they're merely really good-looking. As a couple, they're often spotted strolling around L.A. being really, really ridiculously good-looking.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Looks aren't everything. Outside California, anyway.



37 ELTON JOHN AND DAVID FURNISH (1993-)

HE Britain's queer Queen Mum

HE Tastefully appointed producer of independent films

HOT BECAUSE The celebrity's celebrity couple. They met at a dinner party in John's mansion and now count David Beckham and Prince Charles on their Christmas-card list. John's fiftieth birthday party — to which he arrived, dressed as Marie Antoinette, with a \$10,000 cake on the back of a truck — made headlines, but *Tantrums and Tiaras*, Furnish's warts-and-more-warts documentary on life with his other half, will endure.

NOT HOT BECAUSE John permanently wears the (sequined Versace) pants in the relationship.

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TIME IS *NOT* ON YOUR SIDE

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Violence

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36 ROBERT JOHN "MUTT" LANGE AND SHANIA TWAIN (1994-)

HE Career-reviving, platinum-touched record producer

SHE Man, she feels like a woman

HOT BECAUSE The couple that wins Grammys together stays together. The famously publicity-shy producer and the queen of the Canadian strip malls met and married while working on Twain's 1995 album, *The Woman in Me*. Lange had already cast his power-metal spell over AC/DC, Def Leppard and Foreigner. With 1997's *Come On Over*, he and Twain made the *Thriller* of the '90s — it has sold 34 million copies, making it the biggest country LP of all time.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Shifting units isn't really that sexy, is it?

35

DAVID AND VICTORIA BECKHAM (1999-)

HE The most gifted soccer player of his generation

SHE Shopaholic ex-Spice Girl

HOT BECAUSE They're Great Britain's new royal family. "Posh and Becks" became a tabloid staple when they married in 1999, and they have remained one. Despite the fashionable chant among fans opposed to David's old team, Manchester United — "Posh Spice takes it up the arse!" — their marriage has made them staggeringly popular, powerful and rich. She transformed him from an idiot savant with the voice of Mickey Mouse into a metrosexual icon — wearing sarongs, hair ties and, according to her, her underwear. He has saved her career from Spice Girl ignominy.

NOT HOT BECAUSE She has just signed with Roc-A-Fella Records and "gone gangsta." *Urk!*

→ They're Great Britain's new royal family.



34 SONNY AND CHER (1963-1974)

HE Peacenik turned desert Rat Packer

SHE Irrepressible camp deity

HOT BECAUSE Post-"I Got You Babe," they bounced back from the Las Vegas wilderness with hilarious bickering on *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*. "We didn't know where he was going, but we just wanted to be there," Cher once said of Sonny, who pawned his ring to pay for daughter Chastity's birth. Work came before love — they reunited after a bitter divorce for the sake of the act. Single, Cher won an Oscar, but Sonny later got revenge as mayor of Palm Springs, California — his anti-thong ordinance outlawed his underclad ex.

NOT HOT BECAUSE They precipitated an unfortunate wave of uncles and aunts wearing afghans.



33 MICK JAGGER AND MARIANNE FAITHFULL (1966-1970)

HE Luscious-lipped Rolling Stone

SHE The daughter of an Austro-Hungarian baroness

HOT BECAUSE They were the first rock & roll couple — the first to embrace sex, drugs, drink and scandal in public. She was a beautiful, newly married siren, the Mandy Moore of her generation. He was the bachelor king of Swinging' London. After meeting at a party, they fled their respective partners and lived together on Cheyne Walk, Swinging' London's most swingin' street. There, she took all the drugs the city could offer, but he was on his way to becoming rock's most Dionysian star.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Faithfull always wanted Keith Richards first anyway.

32 BILLY JOEL AND CHRISTIE BRINKLEY (1983-1994)

HE Downtown boy

SHE Uptown girl

HOT BECAUSE According to the fairy tale, Joel spent his 1983 vacation in St. Barths playing a hotel piano. Another guest was supermodel Brinkley. Two years later, they married on a yacht in New York harbor. Not surprisingly, for years he looked like the cat that ate the cream.

NOT HOT BECAUSE No union this difficult to visualize can really be "hot."



31 PAUL AND LINDA MCCARTNEY (1968-1998)

HE The former

Mr. John Lennon

SHE Vilified Beatle wife and anti-meat crusader

HOT BECAUSE Alone, Paul was the sensible Beatle, while Linda was an also-ran rock photographer. Together, they stood for something, even if it was only veggie burgers and getting busted for pot possession.

NOT HOT BECAUSE After never spending a night apart from Linda, Paul married someone more than 20 years his junior after her death.



30 JACK WHITE AND RENEE ZELLWEGER (2002-)

HE Dichromatic blues-guitar maverick

SHE Lemon-faced girl next door

HOT BECAUSE He's 50 percent of the coolest band on earth; she was in *The Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. They met on the set of the film *Cold Mountain* but tried to keep it quiet. After they were spotted together in a Detroit supermarket, one onlooker remarked, "Never would I have guessed that the guy putting stuff on the checkout belt was a love interest." They were outed after the car accident that fractured White's left index finger. He brings her tough-rockin' credibility; she proves that he can date outside the family.

NOT HOT BECAUSE What do they talk about? His taxidermy collection?



29 DAVID BOWIE AND IMAN (1990-)

HE Reborn (again) pop changeling
SHE Brainy supermodel-about-town
HOT BECAUSE Married bliss makes Ziggy accessible. The giddy lovers share their lives via Web chat rooms, riffing on the differences that attract them to each other. Say, their childhood pets: "Iman only had a little puppy in Somalia. But down in London, giraffes were quite the thing," Bowie has joked. Since falling for the Somali politics major, the Oddity traded crimson mullets, cocaine and even Marlboros for sweaters and diapers. Sappy his-and-hers tattoos of a Bowie knife (hers) and a poem, man and dolphin (his) prove that even a 56-year-old man and a 48-year-old woman can find crazy teen love.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Monogamy has not done Bowie's recent CDs any favors.



27 JAY-Z AND BEYONCÉ KNOWLES (2002-)

HE Multimillionaire rap star
SHE Bootylicious Destiny's Child centerpiece
HOT BECAUSE Coy about their relationship, Beyoncé and Jay-Z have courted rumor with a yearlong string of public outings and devotional studio duets, including the chart-topping "Crazy in Love." Beyoncé attended this year's Golden Globes wearing a conspicuous ring, then denied marriage plans, while Jay-Z has called her "just a friend." Not so, according to onlookers in Cannes, France, this summer, who reported that the Brooklyn MC "patted her bottom" during a boat trip on the Riviera. Caught booty-handed!
NOT HOT BECAUSE Beyoncé reportedly dated 50 Cent secretly in April.



28 KID ROCK AND PAMELA ANDERSON (2000-)

HE The number 1 pimp of the nation
SHE Volatile implants in/implants out blonde siren
HOT BECAUSE Unbeatable car-crash appeal. Rock jettisoned his upscale former arm candy, model James King, in favor of someone much more attuned to his white-trash aesthetic. Professional rock chick Anderson got a younger version of her old paramour Tommy Lee. Guaranteed to be the most shameless couple in any room — she crawled around on her hands and knees and licked a bald fan's head at a 2001 party while the Kid pawed her in appreciation.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Rock poached his buddy Tommy Lee's ex-wife. You just don't do that.



26 R. KELLY AND AALIYAH (1994-1995)

HE R&B mastermind and alleged home-video enthusiast
SHE Late airy-voiced teen chanteuse
HOT BECAUSE They were sexed-up singers unfazed by age ... or the law. After producing *Age Ain't Nothin' but a Number* for the then 15-year-old Aaliyah Haughton, Kelly (then 25) married his protégée in a secret Chicago ceremony. "If he ever loved anybody, he loved her," said one former Kelly associate. Shortly after, a judge annulled the marriage upon discovering that Kelly had allegedly falsified Aaliyah's age on the license. Kelly's subsequent exploits — the lawsuits from underage girls, the alleged tinkle-on-a-teen sex tape, his arrest — shouldn't have been much of a shock.
NOT HOT BECAUSE If it feels so wrong, it has to be ... well, wrong!



25 MICK AND BIANCA JAGGER (1970-1980)

HE Luscious-lipped Rolling Stone
SHE The former Bianca Pérez Morena de Macías
HOT BECAUSE Impossibly glamorous, the glitziest of all '70s couples lived the life we can't. Appropriately, the striking pair met just before he became a tax exile in France. With her having reluctantly signed a pre-nup, they married in St. Tropez.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Both spent the wedding day trying to call it off.

24 IKE AND TINA TURNER (1956-1976)

HE A monster
SHE A nice girl
HOT BECAUSE The Ike and Tina Turner Revue, formed in the late '50s with Ike on guitar and the former Anna Mae Bullock on vocals, was as sexually scorching a live act as rock has ever witnessed. Jagger and Richards, for starters, worshipped at their feet.
NOT HOT BECAUSE The ultimate nightmare. He vacuumed cocaine, kept her prisoner and regularly beat her. An enormous solo career provided her a small measure of revenge.



23 BERRY GORDY AND DIANA ROSS (1964-1971)

HE Owner-architect of the Motown sound
SHE The worst-tempered woman in pop music
HOT BECAUSE Superproducer and superstar with decade-spanning infatuation.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Sleeping with the boss always ends in tears.



22 EDDIE VAN HALEN AND VALERIE BERTINELLI (1980-2001)

HE Widdly-widdly guitar god
SHE Comely TV starlet
HOT BECAUSE Bertinelli was a low-key rock wife, but she stood by him through booze, a hip operation and tongue cancer — and helped give him the steel to finally throw David Lee Roth out of the band.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Only guitar magazines dug Eddie. Diamond Dave ruled.



Fatal Attraction?

Is that why rock stars and movie stars insist on dating each other? Let's ask Dr. Mojas!

KATHLEEN MOJAS, 42, is a licensed clinical psychologist working with several entertainment-industry clients in Beverly Hills, California.



Why do so many rock stars date or marry other stars?

It's just another take on the office-romance syndrome: These people tour together, and that's how they meet. Also, they share certain values. But unlike an office romance, they're not working in cubicles — they're half-dressed or kissing on a video shoot.

What can be done about the competitive element when two massive egos shack up?

Stars are inherently insecure. You're only as good as your last album or movie. If one of you has a career that's heading south, that could herald immense tension in the relationship, and you're not far from "irreconcilable differences."

Bobby Brown and Whitney Houston seem to have navigated choppy career waters together. Still, I am unable to recommend them as a viable relationship model.

Say I'm a rock star getting married to another high-profile musician this weekend. Give me one key piece of advice.

Make the necessary professional sacrifices. Schedule your tours so you travel together. Don't let temptation get in the way. Something like 60 percent of American males reportedly cheat in their relationships. If you're a rock star, that percentage must be way higher. You're basically a kid in a candy store. *MICHAEL ODELL*

"Psst, Whitney: You're my besht friend, you are. . . ."



21

**GAVIN ROSSDALE
AND GWEN STEFANI**
(1996–)

HE Poodle-haired Nirvana Lite singer
SHE Forward-looking fashion icon
HOT BECAUSE They're pop's Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn. Stefani and her British-grunge soul mate, the lead singer of Bush, both spent periods in the musical dumper — he "hanging out" with cross-dressing one-hit wonder Marilyn, she in the crappy prototype *No Doubt*. But together, they're a gossip-page staple. Having dated on and off for seven years, they cemented their love twice: They married first in London, then again in Los Angeles. Rossdale was escorted down the aisle by "guest of honor" Winston, the couple's beloved sheepdog.
NOT HOT BECAUSE He's secretly 42 years old.



**18
LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM
AND STEVIE NICKS**
(1971–1977)

HE Afro-sporting guitar whiz
SHE Dress-twirling L.A. gypsy
HOT BECAUSE The king and queen of rock's greatest live-in soap opera, the on-again, off-again star turn at the center of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*. Even now, though it's been over 25 years, the sparks, apparently, still fly.
NOT HOT BECAUSE There's nothing hot about watching Al Gore unsuccessfully try to keep rhythm to "Don't Stop."



**17
JAMES
TAYLOR
AND CARLY
SIMON**
(1971–1981)

HE Self-obsessed, supersensitive singer-songwriter
SHE Self-obsessed, supersensitive singer-songwriter
HOT BECAUSE Free-spirited, gentle and politically correct before political correctness was invented, they became icons for a lank generation.
NOT HOT BECAUSE At their wedding, she was barefoot; he was on methadone.

**16
MICHAEL
JACKSON
AND
LISA MARIE
PRESLEY**
(1994–1996)

HE The King of Pop
SHE The King's daughter
HOT BECAUSE The two most famous families in music get it on! You could hear the country's collective jaw drop when they French-kissed at the 1994 MTV Video Music Awards. "Just think — nobody thought this would last," Jackson said. It didn't.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Even a dynastic coupling like this makes it hard to overlook Jacko's extracurricular "interest" in children.



**15
TOMMY MOTTOLA
AND MARIAH CAREY**
(1990–1998)

HE Brassy record-label boss
SHE Lovely gingham balladeer turned hip-hop honey
HOT BECAUSE Everything dared you to hate the music mogul and his protégée/wife. Mottola turned an ill-tempered waitress into Cinderella; Carey made him a . . . handsome prince. How could such innocence sour? "Everything I did was looked at and overanalyzed," Carey sobbed. Their marriage ended with the single-entendre "Honey" video, in which Princess Mariah flees her evil, Mafioso-like captor with a bunch of campy backing singers. Subtle!
NOT HOT BECAUSE Because of the thought that any of her ballads could be about him.



**14
SID VICIOUS AND
NANCY SPUNGEN**
(1977–1978)

HE Talent-challenged Sex Pistols bassist
SHE An American groupie in London
HOT BECAUSE A proto-Kurt and Courtney. They were tabloid mainstays barely out of their teens, high on love and maybe some heroin . . . until he stabbed her to death in New York's Chelsea Hotel on October 12, 1978, in a drug-induced haze. The pair embodied the collision of punk rock's self-destructive nihilism with the mainstream's glaring limelight, and established once and for all that you don't need to know how to play an instrument to become a rock star.
NOT HOT BECAUSE The New York-born Spungen was so irritating, even the Pistols' Johnny Rotten couldn't stand her.



**20
ELVIS AND
PRISCILLA PRESLEY**
(1959–1972)

HE Sexually odd rock god
SHE Child-bride-in-waiting
HOT BECAUSE The King found his queen. "Blinded by love, I saw none of his faults or weaknesses," Priscilla once wrote. Quit whining — you married Elvis Presley! It's all fascinating, from Elvis grooming 14-year-old Priscilla's hair to the farcical Las Vegas nuptials; the couple accidentally arranged a "secret" wedding up the street from a gossip columnist and had to elope in Frank Sinatra's private jet. Elvis taught Priscilla "to return love — his way," she said. Whatever that meant.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Presley's love was more professionally "returned" by Cybill Shepherd, who has boasted that she was the first to take him downtown.



**19
THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
AND LIL' KIM**
(1994–1997)

HE Brooklyn street hustler turned microphone king
SHE Deep-throated spokes-ho for hip-hop's women's movement
HOT BECAUSE She stands 4 feet, 11 inches tall; he was the size of a VW minibus. Despite the physical mismatch, Kim Jones and Christopher Wallace connected in the studio (on her 1996 solo breakout, *Hardcore*) and between the sheets. They were lovers before — and, it is rumored, during — Wallace's 1995 marriage to buxom singer Faith Evans, and Kim revealed after his 1997 death that she had aborted his unborn child. Biggie's baby-mama!
NOT HOT BECAUSE Picture them playing naked Twister.



13 TIM MCGRAW AND FAITH HILL (1996-)

HE Country king in spray-on jeans

SHE Country queen in spray-on dress

HOT BECAUSE George Jones and Tammy Wynette without the alcoholism and calls to 911. Forget takin' your love to town — McGraw and Hill, Nashville superstars at the top of their game, embody country's cuddly new heart. They're the aspirational couple for those with country childhoods — Hill was given up for adoption, while McGraw was raised by a wife abuser before discovering that his less-than-enthusiastic real father was baseball pro Tug McGraw. Tim says, "The first thing I think every day is, 'She's way out of my league.'"

NOT HOT BECAUSE He really doesn't ever take off that hat.



11 OZZY AND SHARON OSBOURNE (1981-)

HE The Prince of Darkness

SHE The Prince of Darkness's manager

HOT BECAUSE Without her, he'd be wasted/insane/dead. Without him, she'd be managing some bunch of also-ran metal cock-rockers who would probably kill to enjoy half his popularity and success. Sharon stuck by the "Double O" (even though he tried to strangle her in 1989), got him (mostly) sober and turned the Osbournes into a multimillion-dollar brand. Now they each have their own clothing line.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Perhaps they're a little overexposed?



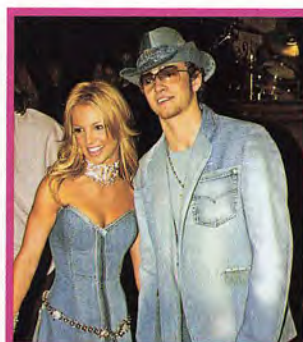
10 CHRIS MARTIN AND GWYNETH PALTROW (2002-)

HE The good-looking Thom Yorke

SHE The Wal-Mart Grace Kelly

HOT BECAUSE The unique appeal of the least rock & roll couple in rock & roll. Separately, they were just weepy, teetotaling artists. Together, they're the same — only ubiquitous. But gossip columns buzz with stories of the preppy Tinseltown princess suffering as she slums around the world with the band, lining up for dessert with roadies and apparently demanding that handlers curtain off a Gwyneth-and-Chris booth. "This is all very weird, because she's a big Hollywood star and I'm just the bloke from Coldplay," Martin says.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Brace yourselves, Coldplay fans: Gwyneth sings.



9 JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE AND BRITNEY SPEARS (1997-2002)

HE Squeaky-clean pop satyr

SHE Virgin/floozy schoolgirl

HOT BECAUSE Imagine Donny and Marie Osmond — dating. It was pure perverted voyeurism. Old pros at 18, Timberlake and Spears played us like violins, and the biggest surprise was that she really was in love with him. About her spent chastity, Spears, now a tequila-slammung fury of an ex-girlfriend, said, "It was two years into my relationship with Justin. And I thought he was the one. . . . I didn't think he was going to go on Barbara Walters and sell me out."

NOT HOT BECAUSE A 2002 Walters interview showcased Timberlake singing an unreleased song about an unnamed "horrible woman."



12 BEN AFFLECK AND JENNIFER LOPEZ (2001-)

HE Down-to-earth Hollywood megastar

SHE Just Jenny from the block, apparently

HOT BECAUSE Perhaps the ultimate couple's couple, Bennifer are now comfortably referred to by a single word. Nonetheless, no matter how much money, fame and power they accumulate, they are, they insist, just regular people. The fact that their joint income exceeds that of many Third World countries, coupled with J.Lo's notoriously demanding nature (she insists that her tea may be stirred only counterclockwise), calls this assertion into question.

NOT HOT BECAUSE At press time, the future of Bennifer was gravely in doubt.

8

AXL ROSE AND STEPHANIE SEYMOUR (1991-1992)

HE Guns N' Roses' main man

SHE Victoria's Secret model

HOT BECAUSE The Sunset Strip fantasy of the metal/fashion axis, theirs was the first relationship charted not through songs, but through videos.

NOT HOT BECAUSE Appearing on magazine covers with Seymour undermined Rose's "most dangerous band in the world" rep.



→ The Sunset Strip fantasy of the metal/fashion axis.



7
GEORGE JONES AND TAMMY WYNETTE
(1968–1975)

HE A pedal-steel Tommy Lee
SHE The first lady of country
HOT BECAUSE Blurring the lines between reality and C&W's nightmarish fantasy world of intoxicated misery, a marriage of the genre's two biggest stars provided a Sonny and Cher for those who didn't care for rock & roll. Despite alleged beatings and threats with a rifle, Wynette stood by her man, Jones, much of the time, couldn't stand at all because of his maniacal booze-and-coke intake. This marital strife made for such excellent duets as "We're Gonna Hold On" — which ultimately proved inaccurate.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Domestic violence is frowned upon in even the most grassroots country circles.



6
BOBBY BROWN AND WHITNEY HOUSTON
(1992–)

HE Superannuated new-jack felon
SHE Mysteriously emaciated diva
HOT BECAUSE They are the urban Burton and Taylor. The spectacular slo-mo public self-destruction of A-listers who refuse to split up — or die — makes this kamikaze duo riveting. Once with Brown, the Windex-clean Clive Davis protégée Houston became a xylophone-ribbed, babbling religious loony. Her slide into tabloid purgatory stopped briefly for the only half-true single "It's Not Alright... but It's OK." The former teen queen turned 40 this year; her hubby is still violating parole.
NOT HOT BECAUSE The unexpected upside of crackhead rumors is that they stop the lesbianism rumors.

5
JOHN LENNON AND YOKO ONO
(1969–1980)

HE Former Mr. Paul McCartney
SHE Banshee-voiced performance artist
HOT BECAUSE The original globally branded rock couple — the star power, the first-name recognition, the disgust with the trappings of fame... oh, and the drugs, the affairs (him) and the inevitable public vilification (her).
NOT HOT BECAUSE Nobody ever really wanted to see them both naked.



3
P. DIDDY AND JENNIFER LOPEZ
(1999–2001)

HE Self-styled black Frank Sinatra
SHE Latina sex bomb/gun moll
HOT BECAUSE They were a potent blend of power and looks, albeit unevenly distributed. After Puffy had sprinkled his fairy dust on Lopez's grooves, she dumped him as her multiplatform star began to outshine his — and, of course, there was that whole nightclub-shooting, gun-dumping imbroglio. "We're regular people, and sometimes relationships don't work out," the pragmatic Bad Boy impresario said after sending R&B smoothie Luther Vandross on a mission to serenade Lopez as a failed Valentine's Day gift in 2001.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Nicknaming her "J.Lo" was his idea.

4
SEAN PENN AND MADONNA
(1985–1989)



HE Bad-boy movie star
SHE Midriff-baring meta-virgin
HOT BECAUSE She rewrote the book on courting attention and controversy; he never met a photographer he didn't want to flatten. Who couldn't help but sit back and watch the sparks fly?
NOT HOT BECAUSE Do you remember *Shanghai Surprise*?



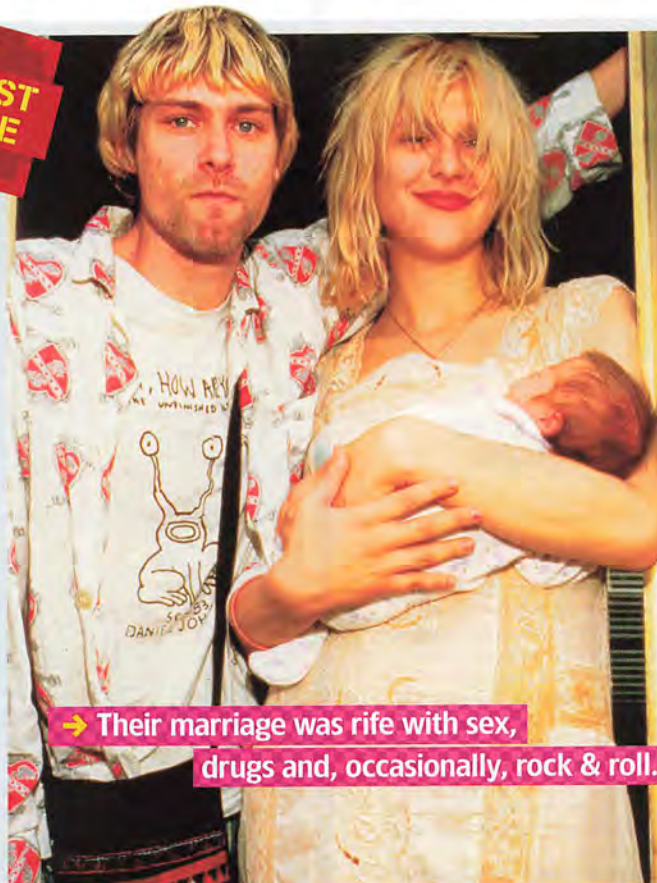
2
TOMMY LEE AND PAMELA ANDERSON
(1995–2000)

HE Well-endowed Mötley Crüe drummer
SHE Pneumatic *Baywatch* pinup
HOT BECAUSE A Shakespearean tragedy — but with penetrative sex. They married on a Cancún beach after a four-day romance. Their controversial 1997 home video shows a couple with a healthy sexual appetite. "I couldn't believe it was possible to feel so happy," Lee has said. "For a so-called bad boy, I was turning into a pansy." They were never boring, though: Lee was imprisoned for spousal abuse in 1998 and again in 2000 for boozing on probation.
NOT HOT BECAUSE The non-sex bits of Lee and Anderson's infamous video were very tedious indeed.

1
THE HOTTEST COUPLE EVER!

KURT COBAIN AND COURTNEY LOVE
(1991–1994)

HE Nirvana's deeply reluctant "voice of a generation"
SHE Masterfully opportunistic femme-punk icon
HOT BECAUSE For three whirlwind years, they stirred shit up like no other rock couple before or since. The grunge Bonnie and Clyde had it all — talent, rebel glamour and balls of steel. Cobain, a guilt-ridden punk purist freaked by fame, got to hide behind Love's big yap and bottomless ambition; she reveled in his genius cred and received a platform for her many, many opinions. Cobain abhorred rock cliché to the point where he agonized over it in his suicide note, yet their marriage was rife with sex, drugs and, occasionally, rock & roll. Oh, and guns. But mostly drugs.
NOT HOT BECAUSE Nearly 10 years later, there are those who still claim that she killed him.



→ Their marriage was rife with sex, drugs and, occasionally, rock & roll.



Are You Experienced?

We talked and dreamed about it, but the reality of the last two years has been an experience that was hard to imagine. We set out to write and record songs that our fans would enjoy; songs that are memorable. But to have the number one most-played song of 2002 is the perfect experience! And JVC has helped make that experience even better by letting us keep all the crazy things we did on tour, using our digital camcorders, or just crashing and watching movies on our big screens. CHAD KROEGER, RYAN PEAKE, MIKE KROEGER, RYAN VIKEDAL – NICKELBACK

CREATE IT • RECORD IT • VIEW IT • ENJOY IT



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"All We Want Is a Little Love"

A TEST OF
HUMAN
NATURE!

→ The idea of punk-metallers **Alien Ant Farm** spending 848 euros on fine French food and wine seemed like a good one. But that was before the restaurant ejections, fistfights and relentless genital exposure . . .

BY ADRIAN DEEVOY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NEIL MASSEY



"*BLENDER HATES US, man,*" slurs Dryden Mitchell, Alien Ant Farm's pained singer. This is pretty rich,

considering that only this evening we have given him \$848 (or its euro equivalent) to blow any way he and his band choose. "Some people in the media have wished us dead," he complains. "All we want is a little love. Why can't you just give us a little love, dude?"

This sincere and heartfelt request for affection could be more easily considered were Mitchell not completely naked and waving his penis perilously close to *Blender's* nose.

We're in a hotel room in Paris. It's 4 A.M., and Alien Ant Farm have not only succeeded in demolishing their cash stack by taking brothers-in-angst Adema out for a night on the town; they have also gotten into an unpleasant interband argument, been thrown out of a restaurant, instigated a nasty fistfight and exposed themselves at every opportunity.

It had all been such a nice idea. Both Alien Ant Farm and Adema were supporting Linkin Park and Staind in Paris, and with a night free, AAF had elected to show their glum chums a magical time in the City of Light. They would eat like kings, drink "an assful of tequila" and then "go get seriously fucked up." What could possibly go wrong?

The night begins promisingly over beer, menthol cigarettes and furrowed-brow conversation in a homely steak restaurant. Mitchell makes for an engaging (if slightly eccentric) host, and goes to great lengths to ensure that his 16 guests are enjoying their "date."

He talks of his obsessive fondness for Edie Brickell ("I know more about her than *she* does"), displays an impressive knowledge of the personnel in Sting's band, sweetly reminisces about his California childhood (Mom was a Mexican stripper, Dad a Canadian literary professor, he says) and enthuses about



"Atkins rules!"
From left: AAF's
Tye Zamora and
Mike Cosgrove

SPEND OUR CASH!

→ THE BAND

Alien Ant Farm

→ THE MISSION

To spend €848 in one day any way they want

→ THE REASON

Blender asked them to!

his latest side project, Shit Wizard.

His mood darkens slightly when discussing last year's road accident that could easily have ended Alien Ant Farm's career, not to mention their lives. On May 22, 2002, in Spain, their tour bus hit a truck. Their driver was killed, Mitchell sustained a broken neck and guitarist Terry Corso shattered a shinbone.

Mitchell spent six months in a metal halo; the holes where it was screwed into his skull are still visible. Recovery was slow ("I couldn't even piss by myself"),

but miraculously, AAF reconvened to record and release *TruANT*, the follow-up to their 2 million-selling debut. "All I think now," Mitchell murmurs, "is that it's good to be alive, and fuck everything else."

To celebrate ongoing life, more Kronenberg 1664 premium lager is ordered, as is some full-bodied American red wine, despite the interesting French selection on the menu. It is while ordering the wine that Adema's frontman, Mark Chavez (half-brother of Korn's Jonathan Davis), proves to be a real charmer. That is, if calling your waitress a "stinking fucking French bitch whore" still passes for charm these days.

To express their disapproval at Chavez's uncouth outburst, both bands begin to flick food at the pocket-size singer. He responds with a hissy fit and throws a glassful of wine, along with the glass, at one of Adema's guitarists ("You motherfuckin' . . . pacifist!"), who promptly leaves.

Various AAF men attempt to placate Chavez, but he demands that they "mind [their] own fucking business" and suggests that a fight might sort out the problem. "I'll be throwing lefts and rights," he warns his 15-strong opposition. AAF bassist Tye Zamora briefly looks up from his prime rib. "I'm scared, dude," he says.

In a cloud of hair product, Chavez flounces out, but not before the management has made it plain that we must pay the bill and vacate the premises *immédiatement*. "Or else I'll call the police," the manager states plainly. "And they are just going to *love* you guys."

We swiftly hit the bars of the bohemian enclave of Bastille. Large glasses



of bourbon are consumed, beers are chugged, hugs are hugged and the air is thick with bonhomie. To set a seal on this feeling of bands reunited, Mitchell takes out his penis and offers strangers "a taste of my man-batter."

It would appear that Mitchell — who, in a certain light, resembles a nü-metal George Clooney — has a childlike fascination with his own and anyone else's genitals. It becomes commonplace for him to conduct an entire conversation while cupping a colleague's testicles. By the time we get to the seedier clubs in the city's Pigalle neighborhood, *Blender's* photographer is desperate for a group picture not showing the Mitchell member.

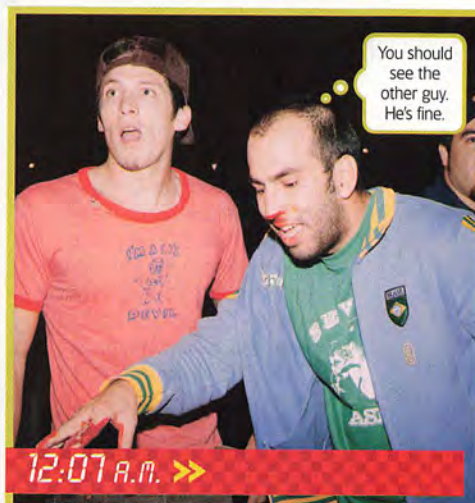
It's in Pigalle, in the shadow of the Moulin Rouge windmill, that things get surreal, then unpleasant. During a mass-moon photo shoot, a passing Frenchman steps up behind Alien Ant Farm's Mike Cosgrove and attempts to anally penetrate the bewildered drummer before casually resuming his late-evening stroll.

Perhaps due to this unwanted



invasion of personal space, Cosgrove later decides to pick a fight with a carload of locals. "C'mon, you fucking French faggots!" he screams. Several AAF and Adema guys get involved, but Cosgrove takes a cracking shot to the face that he believes may have broken his nose.

Undeterred by the altercation, Mitchell leads the way to a last bar, sens-



ing there may be a few final euros in the budget. The party proceeds back to our hotel, where minibars are drained and Mitchell once again produces his penis.

"Dude," he earnestly says to *Blender* while gently rubbing the ubiquitous organ. "If all these other guys weren't here right now, I would *totally* suck your cock."

Well, they don't call it gay Paree for nothing. [BLENDER]

Mitchell offers strangers a "taste of my man-batter."



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THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT >>>>>>

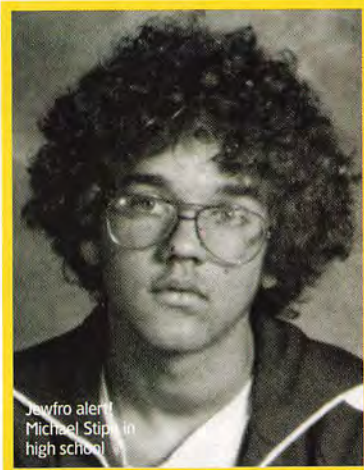
R.E.M.

➔ Michael Stipe likes dresses, Mike Mills was a band geek and Peter Buck makes his kids listen to John Coltrane. But at least the Athens, Georgia, superstars don't suck. "Yet!"

BY DAVID KEEPS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PATRICK HOELCK

1 THEY WEREN'T ALWAYS CALLED R.E.M.

At their first gig ever, in Athens, Georgia, on April 5, 1980, Michael Stipe, Peter Buck, Mike Mills and Bill Berry appeared as Twisted Kites. Afterward, realizing they didn't want to be Kites anymore, they got twisted drunk and wrote a bunch of names on the wall in chalk. The next morning they erased all but two. Fortunately, they did not call themselves Negro Wives.



Jewfro alert!
Michael Stipe, in
high school

2 THEY ALL HAD TERRIBLE JOBS.

Stipe was a cook at a place called Sambo's. Berry was a gofer for a booking agency. Mills worked in the parts-and-service department at Sears. Buck "was more of a behind-the-scenes guy with a mop. I'm still a hell of an industrial dishwasher," he says. "If it comes right down to it, I can clean a table as fast as anyone."

3 MICHAEL STIPE HAD A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT BEING IN A BAND.

It took the lead singer many years of playing live and recording before he discovered the difference between guitar and bass. "I knew there was a difference. I knew we had to have a guitar and a bass to have a band. And I knew that the bass was the one with four strings. But I didn't know that it was the one that made the low notes."

4 THERE AREN'T A LOT OF NICKNAMES IN THE BAND.

The others know Stipe as "Face": "Because I'm the one people recognize and always want to take pictures of and talk to," he explains. "Mike is known as 'The Mills'; and

the only nickname associated with Peter would be 'Buckland.' You know when you've entered Buckland, because hyperbole is one of the grounding forces."

5 PETER BUCK FOUND CHRIST AT AN EARLY AGE.

Jesus Christ Superstar, that is. The concert version of the show was the first gig he went to, in 1970 at the Hollywood Bowl. "Everyone looked like they were in Deep Purple — center-parted hair, little-girl's blouse, bell bottoms. So stoned you can barely move. Not me, but them. And my mom."

6 MIKE MILLS WAS A TRIPLE BAND GEEK.

He played electric bass in the high-school jazz band, tuba in the concert band and sousaphone in the marching band. "I was never beaten up," he says. "But I probably should have been."

7 BILL BERRY HATED MIKE MILLS.

They were both raised in Macon, Georgia. "He was more of a juvenile delinquent, and I was a really straight kid," Mills says. One day, a ➔

Courtesy of Remmon.com

R.E.M., from left:
Peter Buck,
Michael Stipe,
Mike Mills



["We are completely out of step with whatever is popular."]

mutual friend of the enemies invited both — unbeknownst to them — to a basement jam. By the time Berry got his drums down the basement steps and saw Mills there, he was too tired to storm off. “We gave it a shot,” Mills recalls. “And ended up best friends.”

8 BERRY NOW OWES MILLS A LOT OF MONEY.

“Bill and I were sitting around back in 1977 and I said, ‘All right, Bill, if I toss this piece of paper into the trash can across the room, and if we ever get rich, you owe me \$475,000.’ And we’re laughing, like, ‘Who’s ever going to get rich enough to have that kind of money?’ He still hasn’t paid me.”

9 R.E.M. ARE LO-FI GUYS.

“I think modern recording is crap,” Stipe says. “The first recording we ever did, we used pencils to hold a piece of tape so we could do a tape loop. The tape was 20 feet long, so we had to stand at separate corners of the room, holding a pencil with the tape going around it and through the reel-to-reel tape recorder.”

10 EARLY R.E.M. TOURS WERE NOT LUXURY AFFAIRS.

The first time the group played in New York, Buck says, they drove up from Athens in a green Dodge van Berry had bought cheap. “It had shag carpeting on the ceiling. Somebody had to sleep in it with a big knife every night so the equipment wouldn’t get stolen.”

11 AND THEY HAD A SPINAL TAP MOMENT.

“We played an Air Force gig in Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1982,” Mills says. “We had a captain in uniform who took us for steaks in the officers’ mess. Then we played the show, and they hated us. They wanted Joan Jett or someone with more balls than we had.”

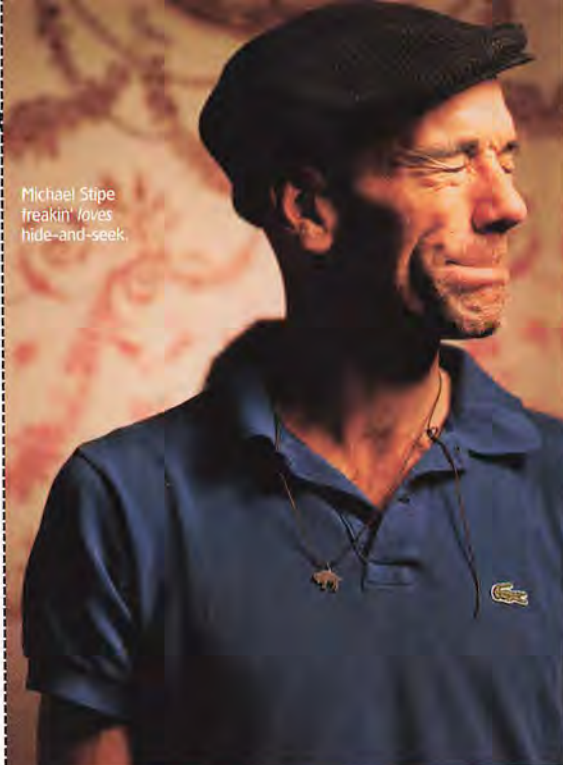
12 R.E.M.’S WORST GIG EVER?

“Detroit, 1982,” Buck says without hesitation. “We played for four people, and they were all tripping. Then we took them out to dinner at a Greek restaurant. Every time we go to Detroit, we meet a hundred people who were those four.”

13 R.E.M. WERE BIGGER THAN MICHAEL JACKSON.

Their first LP, 1983’s *Murmur*, was voted the number 1 record of the

Michael Stipe
freakin’ loves
hide-and-seek.



Wow, Michael Jackson used to be black!

year in the *Village Voice*’s prestigious critics’ poll. “Number 2 was *Thriller*,” Stipe says, “which has sold 45 million copies. Meanwhile, we were still traveling around in our van, living off \$5 a day and eating potato knishes.”

14 THEY MADE THE FIRST ANTI-VIDEO VIDEO.

The song was “Fall on Me,” and Stipe shot it himself at an Indiana quarry in 1986. “It didn’t have any band members in it, it was shot in one take, it ran backward and upside down and it had the words to the song running through the



“Who you calling ‘Uncle Fester?’”

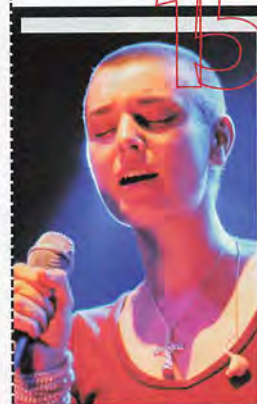


Live at the Rat in Boston, 1984

15

SINÉAD O’CONNOR TAUGHT STIPE HOW TO LIP-SYNC.

Until “Losing My Religion,” the lead singer thought that lip-syncing was insulting to the original song: “I discovered the power of it watching ‘Nothing Compares 2 U’ by Sinéad O’Connor,” he says. It’s the one where she cries, and I was incredibly moved by her performance. I said, ‘If she can do that, I can too.’”



With original drummer Bill Berry (right)

middle of it. And MTV played the living shit out of it,” Stipe says, laughing.

16 NINETEEN NINETY-FIVE WAS A BAD YEAR FOR R.E.M.

First, Berry suffered a near-fatal brain aneurysm while performing on the band’s *Monster* tour. Then Mills had an abdominal tumor removed, and Stipe had to go under the knife for a hernia. Berry retired from the band to his Georgia farm in October 1997. “He’s less likely to have an aneurysm than anyone else in the band,” Mills says of Berry’s current health.

17 BERRY WON’T BE REJOINING THE BAND, THOUGH.

“The trauma we went through when he quit was such that none of us wants to go through that again,” Mills says. “Including him.”

18 BUCK IS NOT A PERFECTIONIST.

He and Berry were the guys who always showed up at the recording studio early and were happiest with the first take of a song. “It’s kind of a joke, but it’s true,” Buck says. “If it was up to me, every one of our records would be a demo, and if it was up to Mike and Michael, they’d still be mixing *Murmur*.”

19 THEY STILL HAVE A DRUMMER NAMED BILL.

Bill Rieflin toured with Ministry and Nine Inch Nails before joining R.E.M. in the studio and on the road. “To paraphrase Courtney Love,” Stipe says, “he knows my every butt twitch. So he’s good to have behind me.”

20 R.E.M. ALL SLEEP ON THE BOTTOM BUNK.

On the tour bus, Stipe gets the one on the right-hand side. “In an accident, the bus would probably fall to the right, so it makes sense to me to be closer to that side,” he explains, “but that’s really

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macabre." Buck can't sleep at all on the bus: "I wake up every five minutes. It's like a coffin."

21 YOU WOULDN'T WANT PETER BUCK AS YOUR DAD.

"I don't let my kids choose what's on the car radio," says the father of two daughters, Zoë and Zelda. "They listen to what I like to listen to. I am cognizant of the fact that they're probably not really going to enjoy John Coltrane's 25-minute skronk version of 'My Funny Valentine!'"

22 STIPE AND BUCK DON'T HANG OUT IN THE DRESSING ROOM.

Buck watches the opening band, "then I lock myself in a room with my guitar." Before they play, Stipe says, "I stay as far away from Peter as I can. He gets really hyped-up and anxious. All I do is slap on some makeup, have a cigarette and not think about what I'm about to do."

23 STIPE HAS NEVER HAD STAGE FRIGHT, BUT...

"I'm terrified when there are cameras and it's going out live on television. I can't stand up at a wedding reception; I can't give a speech to, like, 10 of my best friends — I'll sweat through my clothes. Public speaking absolutely petrifies me."

24 STIPE KNOWS THAT A MAN IN A DRESS MAKES AN IMPRESSION.

"It's pretty simple, but it really fucks with people's heads," he says. Normally, he rocks a frock over jeans. "I've done bare-legged, too. And yeah, I've gone commando."

25 AS DOES A MAN IN MAKEUP.

On R.E.M.'s most recent tour, Stipe wore a colored stripe across his eyebrows from temple to temple — in Europe it was orange; in the U.S. it was blue. Nonetheless, he says, "Light pink is really the color of the season."

26 STIPE HAS HAD HIS SHARE OF BAD-HAIR DAYS.

Long, short, asymmetrical, brown, yellow and now... gone. But the strangest of all was when he shaved a ring around his head like Friar Tuck. "That was a monk's tonsure," he says. "Someone had to tell me what it was called. I was just trying to create a hairstyle for the 1980s."



"Where the hell is that food taster?"



"Scratch your head, Pete."



"No."



"This one's called 'Laundry Mix-Up.'"

27 R.E.M. HAVE HAD SOME "SPECIAL" FANS.

"I had one girl show up on my front porch," Mills recalls. "My girlfriend answered the door, and she came back and said, 'There's this really pretty girl on the porch that I don't know.' I'm like, 'Oh, jeez, who could that be?' I go out there, and this girl says, 'I understand it all now. The music and the numbers on the records: I understand it now.' And I said, 'You want the singer's house. He's around the corner.'"

28 R.E.M. STILL DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE.

"We've never found a category we fit into," Stipe says. "We are completely out of step with whatever is popular, whatever is

happening, trendy, fashionable and faddy. We've just stubbornly gone our own route for 23 years. We're still here — and we don't suck yet."

30 R.E.M. HAVE A BEEF WITH GWB AND CNN.

"Bad Day," their new single and video, in which they play newscasters with bad comb-overs, is "a bit of an indictment of the president," Stipe says, "but it's more an indictment of 24-hour news media."

31 THE ANSWER, SAYS R.E.M., IS NOT BLOWING IN THE WIND.

"It's blowing in one ear and out the other of vacuous pop stars," Mills declares. "The social conscience is really scattered right now. People aren't demanding anything of pop music. They want escapism."

32 IT'S TOUGH BEING A SOUTHERN BAND.

Recently, a fan at a show yelled for R.E.M. to play Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Freebird." "I just felt sad for the poor guy," Stipe says. "I think the people around him pummeled him into submission, and I didn't have to lift a finger. It was brilliant."

33 NO "SHINY HAPPY PEOPLE," THEN....

R.E.M.'s newly released *In Time: 1988–2003 The Best of R.E.M.*, their second greatest-hits collection, features the band's favorite songs from the Warner Bros. era, plus two new tracks. Along with obvious picks like "Losing My Religion" and "Man on the Moon," the band used a scientific method for choosing the rest. "We had a list of all our songs, and we picked the ones we didn't hate," Mills says. [BLENDER]

29

MICHAEL STIPE, THESPIAN.

In 1988, Stipe made his first film appearance in *Arena Brains*, a short movie by the artist Robert Longo. "It had all these actors who went on to become huge: Steve Buscemi, Ray Liotta. And then there's me."



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→ Who would have believed two years ago that self-confessed "problem child" **Pink** would change the pop landscape forever? Yet today Christina Aguilera and Avril Lavigne dance to the beat of her drum. How did she do it? "I went out on a limb," she tells *Blender*, "and I never thought about it twice."

BY DORIAN LYNKEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUDSON BAKER

SHAKING THINGS UP



"OHMIGOD!" PINK shrieks. Then "Ohmigodohmigodohmigod!" Then, just five minutes after we've been introduced, she leaps into *Blender*'s lap. It certainly breaks the ice, but it's not intentional. It's on account of the fly.

A minute ago, we were in the back of a record-company limousine, cruising down Seventh Avenue in Manhattan, when the winged intruder flew in through the window and briefly lodged itself in Pink's dress. Now it squats on the seat she has just vacated. It's brown and spindly and oversize, like a mosquito on steroids. *Blender* flails at it like an amateur Orkin man until the fly is suitably crumpled, and then throws it out the window.

"This is Pink?" you ask yourself. Chain-smoking, hard-drinking, party-starting, Britney-vanquishing Pink, the woman who gate-crashed the teen-pop party, emptied the refrigerator, danced on the table and tapped cigarette ash into the potted plants? This is the woman who is scared of something that is no bigger than her pinkie?

"I'm a walking conflict," she says, smiling as she calmly exits our lap. "In every way possible."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE CAR DROPS us off at a cafe in the East Village. We head for the back garden, where it's quieter and where Pink can smoke her Newports. ("No other brand has enough fiberglass for me," she says.) She's aghast at New York's recently enacted smoking ban. "I'm very disappointed in the people of New York. I thought they'd rebel. I'm still pissed that you can't smoke on flights."

There are five of us at the table: Pink; *Blender*; Pink's assistant Laura Wilson; and Galadriel and Hopey, singer and guitarist for punk-poppers Candy Ass, who supported Pink on her last tour. Wilson and the Candy Assers sport lopsided mohawks and armfuls of tattoos, the acme of lesbian-punk chic. The other diners are either too relaxed or too self-consciously cool to bat an eyelid.

"We met in the Mickey Mouse Club," Pink lies, her arm draped around Hopey. "We're the ones who you don't hear about. There was Justin, Britney and Christina . . . then us."

"One can of
nonspecific foamy
beverage coming
right up!"



TOP BY BETSEY JOHNSON.
BRA BY COSABELLA. SKIRT
BY JUDY ROSEN. BRACELET
BY LARA BOHINC 107

Not so long ago, Justin, Britney and Christina, that trio of erstwhile Mouseketeers, seemed invulnerable. Back then, fresh-faced cheerleaders seemed to bound directly from *The Mickey Mouse Club* to *TRL* until the charts resembled the final reel of a teen movie about following your dreams. By November 2001, however, the world was in a less chipper mood, and Pink's second album, *Missundaztood*, offered a vastly different script.

In this version, the outsider not only prevailed but rearranged the whole high-school hierarchy. When you look at a pop world where Avril Lavigne outsells Spears and Aguilera plays the angsty outsider, you're looking at a world of Pink's design. Two weeks shy of her twenty-fourth birthday, the woman born Alecia Beth Moore won't pretend that wasn't part of the plan.

"I'm not saying I move mountains, but I've done some things that other people have been afraid of doing," she says. "I went out on a limb, and I never thought about it twice. It was what needed to be done."

If the beer-stained "Get the Party Started" and the tear-stained "Family Portrait" are equally true to Pink's personality, today she's veering toward the former. She has just handed her third album, *Try This*, to Arista Records CEO Antonio "L.A." Reid. His reaction was positive, and so is her mood. She laughs a lot, frequently at herself, with a husky chuckle that sometimes resembles that of Muttley the cartoon dog.

Ordering lemon sole with shrimp and a glass of iced tea, she shows *Blender* some pictures on her PalmPilot. They're from an "underwear party" she went to with her boyfriend, motocross star Carey Hart. She clicks through the images, commenting on each one as she goes. "There's half my boyfriend's head. . . . Drunk. . . . Drunk. . . . Here, look at my gut. Isn't that fun?"

Today, Pink is looking uncharacteristically ladylike in a rainbow-pattern summer dress and sexy white stilettos. Her dyed blond hair is scooped up at the front like an ice-cream sundae. When she visited Arista to play the new album for Reid, one member of the Arista staff, much to Pink's annoyance, noted her outfit and said, "Oh, you're being Alecia

today, not Pink." As far as Pink is concerned, there's no distinction.

"I don't live up to anything, and I don't have a part to fill," she says. "I saw Kiss on a talk show, and they're businessmen in suits with no makeup, and they're like, 'Who we are onstage is completely different from who we are in real life.' I don't relate to that at all. I don't want to be somebody else."

Coming from someone who sang the exact opposite sentiment ("I want to be somebody else") on her hit "Don't Let Me Get Me," this suggests a healthier frame of mind. On that song, she confessed how miserable her obsession with looks always made her when she was younger, but the press hasn't taken the hint. During her last U.K. tour, a British magazine snidely remarked that her midriff wasn't as taut as it once was.

"I know," she says, patting her belly proudly. "There's just more of me to love."

People know that I'm not Barbie, and I'm all right with that. There's a lot of pressure on women and kids to look and be a certain way, and I don't agree with that. It's nauseating, it's depressing and it makes people suicidal. So I was trying to change that. You don't have to be skinny and beautiful — you've just gotta have charm and personality, baby." She hoots with laughter, waving her feet. "And a good pair of fuck-me heels."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PINK'S SUCCESS thus far has been the triumph of the underdog, but more than 8 million album sales down the line, she no longer qualifies as such. Having played the prickly R&B infiltrator on her debut, *Can't Take Me Home*, and the surly pop rebel on *Missundaztood*, she finds herself

the multiplatinum success that others want to emulate. Rising starlets are currently advised to acquire some tattoos and a broad streak of self-loathing.

The most glaring example of this was Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful," an outsider anthem penned by *Missundaztood* cowriter Linda Perry. Surely this would never have happened without Pink? . . .

Pink pulls a face. "You're really looking for something, aren't you?" After much deliberation, she has a response.

"Certain people are leaders; other people are followers," she says carefully. "Some people have original ideas; some people market themselves after other people's original ideas. I happen to be a leader, and I have been since kindergarten. But then, I've been influenced by other people too, and some small part of me takes it as a compliment. They won't admit it publicly, but they obviously like what I do."

She looks pleased, like a grade-school student who has just answered a particularly difficult question in class. "That's my diplomatic answer."

Very diplomatic. You should be a politician.

"No, I shouldn't — it won't last long."

When the *Missundaztood* juggernaut halted a year ago, Pink had no plans to reenter the studio. "At first, I wasn't ready to make this record," she says. "I cried every day. Every interview became a therapy session, because people knew so much about my childhood and wanted me to relive it every time. When you do that all day, every day for a year, you start to want to commit suicide." She laughs loudly. "Or go to Disney World."

She tentatively began *Try This* in her home studio with Linda Perry, receiving writing help from both libidinous female rapper Peaches and Damon Elliott, who is Dionne Warwick's son. But the chief catalyst was Tim Armstrong, frontman for the Bay Area punk veterans Rancid. Armstrong offered his services when he and Pink met at a video shoot for his side project, the Transplants. Pink, who grew up listening to Rancid with her older brother, was intrigued.

"It's weird listening to your favorite band as a really angry teenager on drugs, and then one day they run into you and say they have a song for you," she says. "Tim's supertalented and underrated."

People wouldn't expect Pink to write her whole album with Tim Armstrong from Rancid. I like that."

Some of *Try This* was recorded on the Transplants' bus during their April tour with the

Foo Fighters. Apparently, if you isolate the vocal tracks, you can make out the rumble of the bus engine. She laid down the rest of the songs as the tour finished. Arista executives left her alone; she left them mischievous phone messages promising the record would be "death-metal opera." She emerged from recording just once — to contribute a song



Pink with boyfriend Carey Hart at the 2003 MTV Movie Awards



Pink: Available
for children's
parties



BURNT DRESS BY
ARJAN K. BRA BY
LE MYSTÈRE. JEWELRY BY
AUDREY WERNER

(the Beck-penned "Feel Good Time") and a cameo role (as a motocross race starter) to *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*.

After *Missundaztood*'s traumas, *Try This* is more combative and less self-lacerating, as Perry suggested it would be in May when she told reporters, "I personally didn't want to hear her yapping about her problems."

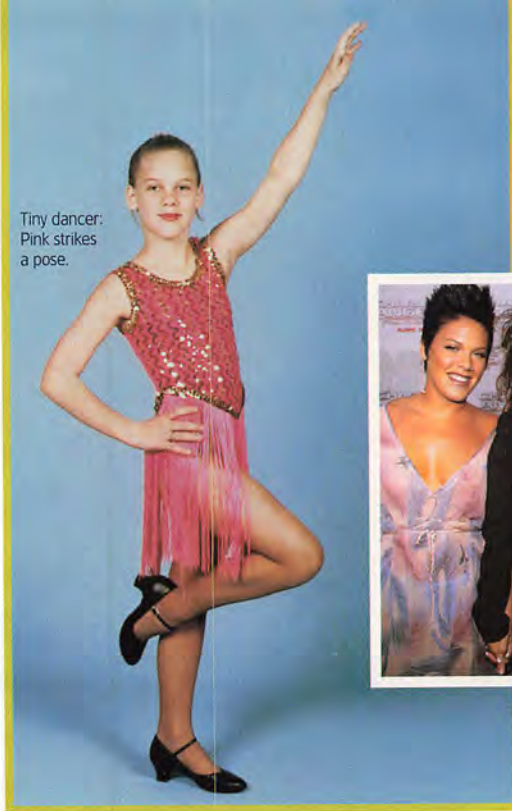
So the new record is not Pink's diary set to music. The intriguingly titled "Save My Life" refers to some old drug buddies from Philadelphia, not to Pink, and "Unwind," though it initially seems autobiographical, is actually about Janis Joplin, the taboo-busting singer who died of a heroin overdose at age 27.

"I wrote the song about her, but then I realized that every line was true to me," Pink says. "I've always identified with the ugly-duckling syndrome. People were like, 'What's she doing? Is she a dyke? What's her deal?' I've always related to everything about her. I think the difference between me and her is that I'll survive. Hopefully."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PINK RECENTLY bought a house in suburban Los Angeles. She has met some of her neighbors. One woman turned up

Tiny dancer: Pink strikes a pose.



space to be alone (boyfriend Carey lives in Las Vegas) and play with her two new dogs. Her

previous dogs have moved on: Fuckler to a quiet life with Pink's father under the less contentious name of Fred, and Corky to the canine afterlife. Pink recently had his name — SIR CORKY MOORE — tattooed in swirling script on her left arm as a tribute.

The house is also a retreat from the attention that fame brings.

When she was a teenager, she would dye her hair and march into a room, desperate to provoke a reaction. Now she finds herself wearing a hat and hiding in the corner of a restaurant, hoping nobody will notice her. "It has changed a part of my personality that I miss, but I guess I was always



↑ Two non-blondes: With Linda Perry at the premiere of *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*

at her door with a tray of cookies and a request that Pink turn her lights out late at night because they were keeping her awake. Pink thanked her for the cookies, suggested she buy curtains and shut the door on her.

She likes it there, though. She has

teenager, she would dye her hair and march into a room, desperate to provoke a reaction. Now she finds herself wearing a hat and hiding in the corner of a restaurant, hoping nobody will notice her. "It has changed a part of my personality that I miss, but I guess I was always



trying to get attention and piss people off. Now I just do it on a wider scale."

Has success made you more or less self-critical?

"Less. When I was growing up, everybody told me I was a fuck-up and that I'd end up on a dump heap somewhere." Pause. "But then again, more, because show business is like high school. Now, instead of 600 kids at high school judging you, it's the entire world."

For that reason, among others, Pink prefers to avoid music-industry events. Later tonight, the MTV Video Music Awards will be held at Radio City Music Hall. Pink was invited to attend (last year she collected two VMAs while visibly hammered), but it isn't her idea of fun.

"It's like a big circle-jerk," she says, scowling. "Everyone sits around jerking everybody off — 'Ohmigod, you're so great!' — and then they turn around and say, 'She looks like shit.' Plus, it's boring. God! Where did the fun go? I should have been alive in the '60s. Everyone would have been drinking and hollering and playing guitar and setting things on fire." She chuckles. "I miss the fire."

She's equally uneasy with her newfound wealth. "I appreciate everything I have, but money, to me . . . I don't



know. Money makes people evil. I wish we still had the barter system. Because I have a lot of clothes to exchange."

One advantage of success, she has discovered, is the ability to speak out about politics and be heard. Her Web site, pinkpage.com, features links to non-profit organizations, such as Help the Homeless and Greenpeace, and she recently wrote letters (remember those?) to Britain's Prince William and Anna Wintour, the editor of *Vogue*, protesting

against hunting and the fur trade, respectively.

These sentiments go back a long way. As a schoolgirl in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, every paper she wrote dealt with either animal rights or the legalization of pot. She traces her principled stances to her father, Jim Moore, a Vietnam veteran-turned-insurance salesman.

What did he stand up for?

"Oh, you name it," she says proudly. "From getting the neighbors to stop parking their cars on our lawn — with a sledgehammer — to fighting the townships. He insured the police department, and he lost the deal by sticking up for me when I got arrested. I was in court every other week. The cops had nothing better to do than arrest kids."

It's strange hearing Pink talk about her youth, because people who have heard *M!ssundaztood* or seen her episode of VH1's *Driven* feel like they know so much already: about the dinner-table fights in her "war zone" of a home; about her parents' separation when she was 7; about her checkered relationship with her mother, who threw her out when she was just 15. Sharing family conflicts with several million listeners didn't do Eminem any favors with his relatives, →



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but it seems to have worked pretty well for Pink.

"It was good for me and my family, and it was good for a lot of other people's families," she says. "There wasn't a lot of truth in mainstream pop music, and there's a lot of truth in that record. But people started thinking it had a bigger effect on me than it actually had. My mom said to me, 'I didn't know our divorce affected you so much.' I'm like, 'The divorce wasn't what affected me — it was you!'"

She cackles. "No, I love my mom. Let's state that for the record."

Last year, Pink's mother gave an interview to *The National Enquirer* in which she described her daughter as a problem child. Despite their differences, Pink does not quibble with that assessment.

"She lasted a lot longer than I would have with me as a child. She kicked me out when I was 15. I'd have kicked me out when I was 6!"

★★★★★

PINK SPENDS a lot of time in her own company. She likes to vacation alone and go for solitary walks in the middle of the night. She says she can count her close friends on the fingers of one hand. "I don't keep friends just so I can have dinner dates," she says.

Closest of all is Laura Wilson, Linda Perry's former girlfriend and Pink's current assistant, who has known Pink for the last two years. Talking to each other and cracking jokes almost constantly, they act more like equals than

Pinstripe
overalls after
Labor Day?
Unforgivable!

OVERALLS BY
DAVID DALRYMPLE
FOR HOUSE OF
FIELD; JEWELRY
BY JILL PLATNER

boss and assistant. Like most of Pink's best friends, Wilson is gay.

"They're trying to convert me, but I definitely like penises," Pink jokes. "I just like strong, assertive, independent, tough women, and they happen to be gay."

Even at her lowest, Pink regards her friends as all the therapy she needs. She was sent to a psychoanalyst when she was 14, but it didn't pan out. "I used to tell [the

therapist] any horrific thing I could think of so she would think I was crazy, but she didn't believe me."

She acts out a typical session. "So, what did you think about today?" "Blood. . . . Hitting my teacher over the head with a bottle." "Really?" "No. I'm just bored."

"I like assertive
women, and they
happen to be gay."

THE MANY MOODS OF PINK

Sometimes she's a teeth-gritting, in-your-face rock chick. At other times . . . oh.



The second-to-last tattoo Pink got, just before the tribute to Corky, was a black razor blade on her left wrist. She says it's kind of a joke, but it's obviously not a light-hearted one. She won't go into details. "Just a reminder," she says simply.

Pink grinds out her last Newport, and Wilson gently gestures toward her watch. They're going out later, and Pink needs a "disco nap" because she was up until 6 this morning drinking vodka. Does she ever get regrettable hangovers?

"Only once in my life. I got on top of a bar and I didn't have any underwear on, and I was wearing my skirt as a belt." She laughs with embarrassment.

How old were you?

"That was about three weeks ago!" Now she's laughing so hard she might fall off her chair. Such revelry is the kind of thing you'd expect

Pink to get up to, but she insists it isn't typical. She's a "hopeless romantic" who confesses to all manner of girly behavior, past and present: picking flowers, dotting i's with little hearts and doodling boy-friends' surnames after her own name.

On *Try This's* most tender moment, "Love Song," Pink croons, "This is my first love song." She has written about love gone sour before — *Can't Take Me Home* was recorded amid the debris of a six-year relationship — but for the first time, she feels ready to sing a love song with a happy ending.

How did your boyfriend react?

"He didn't fall over or pass out or wake up crying." She shrugs.

You tend to prefer long-term relationships, don't you?

"Well, I don't really have short relationships, because I'm kind of a prude."

A prude who uses her skirt as a belt.

"Yeah, but nobody can touch me," she says firmly. "You can look, but you can't touch."

Tomorrow, Pink will board a plane to Las Vegas with Candy Assers Galadriel and Hopey to host what they call a "pimp and ho" party. Pink is going to be a pimp. That way, she says, she'll be calling all the shots. [BLENDER]

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**106
THE STROKES**

Julian Casablancas & Co. are back — you'd better hide your girlfriends!

★★★



**110
THE DARKNESS**

Castrato-driven metal revivalists are *Blender's* favorite new act

★★★★



**138
DURAN DURAN**

The '80s pop icons reunite, rock live, leave the pirate pants at home

★★★★

The Guide



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THEIR
FIVE-STAR
TRIUMPH

★★★★★

OUTKAST

Atlanta's mad wizards of crunk split themselves down the middle on dazzling double album, p118

The Down Strokes

New York's hipster fivesome turn mopey on unconfident return

THE STROKES

ROOM ON FIRE

★★★

RCA

A GREAT DEBUT casts a shadow, and the Strokes' 2001 album, *Is This It*, casts a long one. It came like a comet with a rock & roll revival in its tail, offering the White Stripes a ride out of the indie wilderness and onto modern-rock radio. Its most remarkable songs — "Last Nite," "The Modern Age" — feel like an induction into a supercool New York lifestyle of thrift-store drugs and jaded boho babes. It's more than a record; it's a landmark.

Yet just two years on, Strokes songwriter Julian Casablancas's best-documented fear — that his band would fall for rock cliché and fumble its chance — might not be far from realization. The head-turning Hollywood girlfriends (drummer Fab Moretti and actress Drew Barrymore are paparazzi prey) and rumored drug dalliances point the same way. Then there's the studio turmoil and trepidation. The Strokes conducted the sessions for *Room on Fire* with Radiohead producer Nigel Godrich but brusquely

replaced him with trusted *Is This It* deskman Gordon Raphael — a surrender to the comforts of the known.

Maybe these distractions explain the tentative mood of *Room on Fire*. The album starts with a question — a track titled "Whatever Happened?" — that begins with a wish ("I want to be forgotten") that's an immediate anticlimax. Casablancas sounds hoarse and hung over; Moretti performs a ballet on his bass drum pedal; and the guitars of Albert Hammond Jr. and Nick Valensi sound simultaneously sandpappy and dark.

Much of what follows is dense, fraught and fussy, where the Strokes were previously sharp and focused. The second track, "Reptilia," resembles three substandard songs glued together, while "The Way It Is," with rapid texture changes, sounds as if it's moving from one room to another. The third song, "Automatic Stop," has a bracing punk-funk lurch and a great, debauched couplet in "So many fish there in the sea/She wanted him; he wanted me," but a vocal melody, like many on *Room on Fire*, that seems deliberately buried.

If the Strokes are seeking to abort their embryonic rock stardom ("Please slow me down — I'm going too fast," Casablancas pleads in "Reptilia"), they're going about it the right way. The first single, "12:51," offers poppy hand claps and a hummable Valensi riff that sounds like the keyboard on a Cars hit, but the vibe is flat, and nothing exciting happens. Overindulging their melancholy side, the Strokes have

forgotten how to prance like dandies with designs on your sister. The fine distinction between cool and blasé, aloof and distant, seems to have eluded them.

But there are four radiant songs. "Between Love & Hate" will be recognized by those who saw a Strokes show last year as a tune introduced as "Ze Newie." Its irresistible chorus ("I never needed anybody") oozes hip insouciance, and Valensi provides a tragicomic, tumble-down guitar solo. Also from that period, "Meet Me in the Bathroom" is another late-night New York picaresque, fired along on an edgy, robotic beat while Casablancas croons with lovely, subtle vibrato.

In the all-new category, "Under Control" is the Strokes' first genuinely slow song, and it's awesomely deft. Big, tough drums contrast with wistful, thin guitars, so the song comes off like an Al Green cover of something on the third Velvet Underground album. There's also "The End Has No End," a pile-driving, anthemic future set closer, which features an omnipotent Casablancas getting so riled by an underachieving acquaintance (or band member?) that his vocal cords shred à la Kurt Cobain. Now *this* is exciting.

The Strokes are on a mission. It's what makes them different from ordinary rock bands, and no one will feel *Room on Fire*'s relative failure as deeply as Casablancas. If they adjust to their stature, this album will be remembered as a hiccup — too much in limbo between the past and the future, bogged down in confusing sonic distractions. The Clash did the same — followed the perfect debut with an off-target second record — and look what happened next. *New York Calling*, anyone? TONY POWER

The distinction between being cool and being blasé has eluded the Strokes.



LIKE THE STROKES? Try these! →

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND WHITE LIGHT/ WHITE HEAT

VERVE, 1968

★★★★

Hypnotic, sandpapered riffs charge drunkenly through the Velvets' second album. With a gutter-dredging sneer, Lou Reed serenades heroin and "foxy mamas" while John Cale yarns about decapitated heads.



THE MODERN LOVERS THE MODERN LOVERS

RHINO, 1976

★★★★★

Teenage songwriter Jonathan Richman matched his hormone-fizzy lyrics to rickety proto-punk on these punchy rave-ups, recorded in 1973 by John Cale but unreleased for three years.



BLONDIE PARALLEL LINES

CAPITOL, 1978

★★★★★

Debbie Harry swoons, seduces and takes no shit on Blondie's fantastic third album: Her croon is tough, her growl luxurious. While she floats and jabs, the boys in her band etch out a thrilling place where New Wave, '50s pop, '70s riffage and dub reggae meet.



JONATHAN FIRE+EATER WOLF SONGS FOR LAMBS

DREAMWORKS, 1997

★★★

These effete hipsters didn't miss the New York rock revival; they were too early. Before imploding in disarray, JF+E cut this set of lush garage-rock full of tortured howls and revved-up Farfisa riffs. JONAH WEINER



The Strokes, New York's most eligible bachelors, from left: Julian Casablancas, Nikolai Fraiture, Nick Valensi, Albert Hammond Jr., Fabrizio Moretti



AESOP ROCK

BAZOOKA TOOTH ★★★★★

DEF JUX

NYC underground hip-hop fave makes a head-spinning toast to the working class on his fifth album

With a deep, cigarette-stained voice and the uncanny ability to capture lower-middle-class, twentysomething malaise, Aesop Rock (born Ian Bavitz) has become one of underground hip-hop's brighter stars. On the follow-up to 2001's *Labor Days*, an indie hit, the 27-year-old's loquacious, dizzying delivery and disjointed imagery ("Hunters froze

up and exposed Rapunzel weeds") paired with the abstract soundscapes of label chief El-P and longtime collaborator Blockhead make for occasionally uneasy listening. But buried in the chaos and the run-on sentences are keen observations on the state of hip-hop, the state of the world and his own unfulfilled, despairing state of mind. Elsewhere, *Bazooka Tooth* drops the navel-gazing for vicious battle-rhyming (the mic-ripping "Limelighters" and "We're Famous"). It's a potent mix: When he's done drilling into himself, Aesop Rock is ready to destroy his enemies.

CHRIS RYAN

GARY ALLAN

SEE IF I CARE ★★★★★

MCA NASHVILLE

L.A. country made in Nashville, with swooning passion

Gary Allan is the strongest Southern Californian to storm country since Dwight Yoakam. He grew up surfing and playing Bakersfield bars, but by 1999 — when he hit with "Smoke Rings in the Dark," a dashing ballad from the deep-blue Roy Orbison school — Allan had completed three made-in-Tennessee albums; in 2001, he released *Alright Guy*, a sparkling barroom collection and a sharp inquiry into warts-and-all



Gary Allan gives his horse, Mr. Smuckers, a come-hither look.

masculinity. With phenomenal material such as the curt "See if I Care" and the future country-radio lollapalooza "Songs About Rain," Allan pithily integrates his elegant and rowdy sides here. On "A Showman's Life," his slightly metallic tenor is streaked with barely contained disdain. Allan offers a honky-tonk version of Bon Jovi's "Wanted: Dead or Alive," blurring out his fatigue and disappointment over stardom. The song is a tore-up masterpiece.

JAMES HUNTER

BARENAKED LADIES

EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE

★★★

REPRISE

Canadian folk-pop quintet attempts a shaky balancing act

"If I check the irony/Would everybody cheer me?" Steven Page, singer-guitarist for alt-pop smart asses Barenaked Ladies, wonders on "Testing 123," a cheeky, self-referential jangle-pop jaunt from their sixth album. Despite the question, the album shows that BNL aren't quite ready to play it straight. For every earnest, country-inflected love song ("For You"), there's a nonsensical synth-pop ode to shopping ("Shopping"). For every time singer-guitarist Ed Robertson injects gravitas into a solemn, swaying song about suicide ("War on Drugs"), Page yammers a mile-a-minute rhyme about postcards of chimpanzees ("Another Postcard [Chimps]") in the mold of their car-commercial hit "One Week." They do loosen up the folk-pop shackles, laying strings across four tracks and working up an odd tango/klezmer groove on "Upside Down." But the record feels uneven, as the oscillation between frivolous and serious makes both less convincing.

DAVID PEISNER

THE SCORE >>

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK

ONCE A TOOL...

Tool spin-off make an autobiographical drug record

A PERFECT CIRCLE

THIRTEENTH STEP ★★

VIRGIN

>> AS THE FRONTMAN of the influential metal band Tool, Maynard James Keenan never appears in videos, and he hates interviews. But as the singer for his side project A Perfect Circle, he had better prepare for some intrusive questions.

APC call their new record *Thirteenth Step*, a barely double-entendre reference to a drug past. And while Tool have touched on themes of intoxication and sobriety before, here nothing seems held back.

On the first song, "The Package," Keenan snarls about doing anything to get what he craves. The first single, "Weak and Powerless," has him singing, "Someone feed the monkey while I dig in search of China/White as Dracula as I approach the bottom." APC like to perform live behind a screen; now they may have to do interviews behind a screen, too, the better to dodge questions about whether the lyrics were written on Betty Ford Clinic stationery.

This is a classic 1970s-style headphones record that's both arty and unusually disciplined. Prog-rock from King Crimson to Radiohead squirts out notes by the gallon, but APC never try to impress you; they're confident enough to smolder. Built around single-minded mid-tempo pulses, with strings and a hint of old-school synthesizers, the music here evokes a tenderness that's vaguely menacing — a menace you want to curl up and nap in.

The songs, though, are like beached whales: They build and build to substantial midpoints and then fade out. Except for two disquieting lullabies, they don't ever go anywhere.

Telling the world you're wrestling with demons doesn't make your demons inherently interesting. You don't need a million notes to end up self-indulgent. *RJ SMITH*

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> Were the lyrics written on Betty Ford stationery?

BASEMENT JAXX

KISH KASH ★★☆☆

XL/ASTRALWERKS

British duo known for "Where's Your Head At?" bring noise to the dance floor, brilliantly

KINGS OF DANCE MUSIC

As the first people to even think of putting punk queen Siouxsie Sioux, Brit-rap enfant terrible Dizzee Rascal and 'N Sync refugee JC Chasez on one disc, London duo Basement Jaxx have come a long way from their roots as New York house devotees. Nonetheless, their most violently inventive album yet is still all about scuffing up their favorite American records. So "Good Luck," while an homage to classic Motown, pumps it with quasi-junglist adrenaline, while "Plug It In" pitches Chasez into scabrous, mutant R&B, with a stabbing riff drawn from hardcore rave. *Kish Kash* (the title is slang for money) has a calmer flip side, epitomized by the lush "If I Ever Recover," but Basement Jaxx are best when they're causing a ruckus. **DORIAN LYNKEY**

BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

DEAR CATASTROPHE WAITRESS ★★☆☆

ROUGH TRADE

On their sixth album, Scottish indie-pop heroes set the controls straight for 1968 AM radio

After two high-profile personnel defections, a misguided soundtrack and this album's very fancy production job by Trevor Horn, what's left of über-twee underground pop heroes Belle and Sebastian? Stuart Murdoch's slyly observed character studies have given way to wobbly whimsy, such as a homoerotic love song to a baseball all-star ("Piazza, New York Catcher"), and more than ever, the clip and purr of his singing imitates his idol, Love's Arthur Lee. But Murdoch's gift for loopy, tender, unshakeable hymns, stomps and meditations is untouchable, and nurturing his bandmates' songwriting has paid off — guitarist Stevie Jackson, in particular,



Belle and Sebastian are a great band — to poop on!

now sounds more like a leader than a disciple. The band plays and harmonizes with the easy grace of '60s studio pros, especially on the spectacular garage-rock closer, "Stay Loose."

DOUGLAS WOLK

BLACK BOX RECORDER

PASSIONOIA ★★☆☆

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

Incisive third album of frosty Anglo-phobia from poshly accented duo

So exquisitely English that they make Radiohead, Coldplay and even Her Majesty the Queen seem like Budguzzling rednecks, Black Box Recorder are the pop project of Luke Haines, whose other band, the Auteurs, is a kind of hate-filled version of the Kinks. In this case, pop means honeyed synthesizer melodies acting as a Trojan horse for splendidly seedy lyrics about classified-ad dating, teenage lust and the horrors of the British school system. Sarah Nixey articulates the songs in the persona of a deliciously bored, spoiled and corrupt posh girl. When she sings of replacing Princess Diana as a global sweetheart, she leaves the Hilton Sisters for dead in the Ice Queen stakes. An utterly original if slightly queasiness-inducing album.

ANDREW HARRISON

CARLA BOZULICH

RED HEADED STRANGER ★★☆☆

D/CRISTINA STAIRBUILDERS

Jazzbo upstarts rattle Willie Nelson's classic into new and interesting shapes

Though its subjects are wild-eyed grief and violent death, Willie Nelson's 1975 concept album, *Red Headed Stranger*, is among the sparest records ever to hit the charts, an evocative X-ray of coun-

try music. This deceptive simplicity makes it the perfect record to dress up and play with, as singer Carla Bozulich, of L.A. country-punk outfit Geraldine Fibbers, and guitarist Nels Cline have done here. The mixed but engaging results include late-night Kenny Burrell jazz ("Remember Me"), Nico-like incantations ("Medley") and slightly skewed honky-tonk ("I Couldn't Believe It Was True"), and though some tracks fall short of the mark (including, oddly, all those that Nelson himself sings on), the project's verve and imagination carry the day.

JOHN RATLIFF

TONI BRAXTON

MORE THAN A WOMAN ★★☆☆

ARISTA

Soul queen gets a musical facelift

Toni Braxton's well-publicized bankruptcy seems to have dictated the course of her career; her surefire formula — adult contemporary with a

hip-hop/soul veneer — led to the megahits "You're Making Me High" and the all-powerful "Un-break My Heart," the biggest number 1 hit of the '90s, both of which she has recycled again and again. But on her fifth album, Braxton unwisely breaks ties with the producers and writers behind her hits in favor of husband Keri Lewis and the Neptunes, who strip down her music into a kind of ghetto techno. The beats remain tight, even if they don't stick in your mind, but she has jettisoned her most important ingredient — the maturity in the melodrama. Now 35 years old, she's still singing about boyfriends, and even demands her "uh-uh" back from her ex. Sounds like considerably less than a woman.

JAMES HANNAHAM

EDIE BRICKELL

VOLCANO ★★☆☆

CHERRY/UNIVERSAL

Hippie singer ends her retirement, endorses appreciation of natural resources

In the 10 years since Edie Brickell last made a record, she raised three kids with much-older husband and vaunted songwriter Paul Simon. But the gal who turned the catchy chorus "What I am is what I am" into a late-'80s self-acceptance mantra with her band, the New Bohemians, has ditched the band — and the bohemianism, too. *Volcano* isn't

walfish or frisky, and she lends her more confident voice to music that's smooth and vaguely jazzy in a folk-rock way. The single "Rush Around" is a waltz urging listeners to "take time to breathe"; "Take a Walk" asks you to turn off your TV and stroll through the park. It's a noble sentiment, but if this album were a TV network, it would be PBS — sincere and dull.

RJ SMITH

COHEED AND CAMBRIA

IN KEEPING WITH SECRETS OF SILENT EARTH: 3 ★★☆☆

EQUAL VISION

Insecure boys lament broken hearts, celebrate *Star Trek* conventions!

Emo bands tend to draw from a familiar well of themes (sadness, girls, sad girls), and Coheed and Cambria are no different — except they sing about sad girls in outer space. Like some mutant hybrid of with-it peers Thursday and utterly without-it ancestors Rush, on their sophomore album the Kingston, New York, quartet (named after the fantastical characters who star in their concept-based songs) dream up an entire genre (prog-emo?) and blow past



That's the last time Basement Jaxx get to share a dressing room with Britney Spears.

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THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES

the dull orbit of their samey Warped Tourmates. Singer Claudio Sanchez wraps his painfully sincere falsetto around complicated, compelling songs with names like "The Camper Velourium II: Backend of Forever," while his band finds a middle ground between sci-fi metal weirdness and radio pop. Fueled by hand claps and cascading *whoa-oh-ohs*, "Blood Red Summer" is the sweetest song ever written about a dystopian, alternate-universe dream world. C&C may be wearing silly Spock ears, but they do set their phasers to stun.

ANDY GREENWALD

CRACKER

COUNTRYSIDES ★★★

IMUSIC

On their sixth album, the Virginia four-some behind the 1993 rock-radio hit "Low" take on Dixie and Dick Cheney

After a decade of smart, roots-inspired alt-rock, Cracker have made their Southern heritage explicit. Their newest release is eight classic country songs, from the feisty ("Up Against the Wall, Redneck Mother") to the forlorn ("Reasons to Quit"), that the band road-tested live, touring as Ironic Mullet. As that moniker suggests, they're not exactly playing it straight. In the hands of frontman David Lowery, these tunes become a sardonic commentary on working-class troubles, the sins of our current administration and wanting to "get the fuck out of the USA." The clincher is a Hank Williams Jr. song that goes, "Leave me alone, I'm just carryin' on an old family tradition." The words might as well belong to George W. Bush.

JOSH EELLS

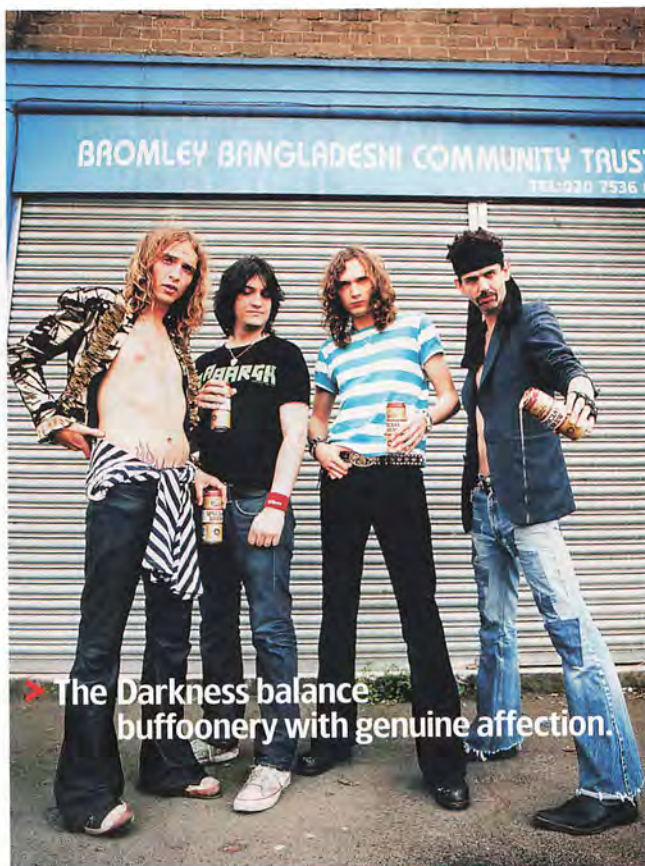
KIMYA DAWSON

MY CUTE FIEND SWEET PRINCESS ★★★

IMPORTANT

Bunny suit-sporting Moldy Peach doesn't want to grow up on her third solo outing

Kimya Dawson looks like Ronald McDonald crossed with Tina Turner: frizzy hairdo, crazy outfits and electric smile. So it's surprising that she's so unassuming on record. Half of scrappy NYC folk-punkers the Moldy Peaches, she talk-sings over acoustic guitar, modestly cutting short syllables and shrugging off big lines ("Why do I always pretend/I can spoon a guy and still be his friend?"). Her timidity softens the grotesque comedies she narrates: Thirty-one years old with a 14-year-old's voice, she sounds vulnerable and hardened at once. On "Chemistry," she's endearingly shy about a first sexual encounter, nervously unspooling an overwrought — and totally indecipherable — metaphor concerning electronics and absentee ballots, while her



➤ The Darkness balance buffoonery with genuine affection.

SMELL THE GLOVE

Ridiculous British longhairs revive '70s falsetto metal

THE DARKNESS

PERMISSION TO LAND ★★★★★

ATLANTIC

➤➤ ALTHOUGH THEY RETAIL the world's least fashionable musical styles ('80s British heavy metal and Journey-esque power ballads) and come from nowhere (a dismal English seaside town called Lowestoft), it's really not too much of an exaggeration to say that the Darkness have gripped the imagination of all those who have stumbled upon them.

A bravura and at times ridiculous live act, the quartet was the band of this summer's British festival season and hit the top of the U.K. charts as a result of shows that included onstage headstands and guitar solos performed while perched on the shoulders of hairy roadies.

Amid a sea of overly serious rockers and precious pop stars, the Darkness offer greasy, irresistible hard-rock riffs ("I Believe in a Thing Called Love"), hilariously florid word-play ("Love on the Rocks With No Ice") and a winking celebration of rock &

roll *joie de vivre* ("Givin' Up" is surely the chirpiest song about heroin addiction ever recorded).

Singer-guitarist Justin Hawkins has described his singular, shrill falsetto as an attempt to approximate "a straight Queen" (he's referring to the band, presumably). His lyrics, meanwhile, are deliberately preposterous ("Kiss my arse, kiss my arse goodbye/Propelled by a carriage of aluminum am I"). *Bismillah*, yes!

If all this sounds too Spinal Tap for words, the Darkness balance the buffoonery with genuine affection for heavy metal's hormonal rush, minus the sexism and Dungeons & Dragons that bedeviled the genre in its heyday. In fact, the Darkness play old-fashioned metal with such élan that at times they ascend to pop music's Olympian heights. At those moments, they easily erase the fine line between clever and stupid, and sound thrillingly life-affirming. *ANDY PEMBERTON*

JUSTIN HAWKINS'S
CURRENT LISTENING

FOREIGNER
4 ATLANTIC

NEIL DIAMOND
NEIL DIAMOND'S GREATEST HITS BANG

Combo in the corner?



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September 11-inspired nightmare ("Anthrax") tempers childlike shock with chilling detail. In the end, her sweetness trumps cynicism, but it gets a bit mannered and cutesy, too.

JONAH WEINER

THE DIRTBOMBS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ DANGEROUS MAGICAL NOISE

★★★☆☆

IN THE RED

Motor City mentor makes his move

JACK WHITE'S PALS

Every scene has one: the mack daddy who hotwires the car and then watches someone else drive away with it. In Detroit, Mick Collins is da man, with a raspy voice and a record collection that took Jack White to school. His band, the Dirtbombs, have two drummers and enough Motor City feedback to kill a cow, and now they sound ready to eat some steak. Their third CD tones down the blare, puts vocals up front and is stacked with well-wrought garage-punk songs. Collins loves his "Motor City Baby"; he's "Stuck in the Garage"; he's "Through With White Girls" — in other words, rock-rock-rock. *Dangerous Magical Noise* is a great Friday night, and your ears will ring through Sunday.

RJ SMITH



The Dirtbombs can't believe you just said that.

First Child," but the album reeks of spoiled formula — an emotional moment here, intoxicated conviviality there and thuggery throughout. "We been shooting, fighting, robbing niggas and been stabbing/We done paralyzed niggas and left 'em handicapping," he boasts with typical

imagination. Despite a promising opening ("Feel My Pain"), this keeps the Bronx rapper on the farm-team bench.

kris ex

DRAG-ON

★ ★ HELL AND BACK

RUFF RYDERS/VIRGIN

DMX's homie and *Cradle 2 the Grave* costar fumbles return from Hollywood

When Drag-On debuted with the 750,000-selling *Opposite of H₂O* in 1999, his conversational, run-on word-play paled next to his Ruff Ryder counterparts — Eve, the LOX and mentor DMX. Here, 23-year-old Mel Smalls aims for heartstrings on the introspective "Life Is Short" and "My

DREAM

★ ★ REALITY

BAD BOY/UNIVERSAL

P. Diddy's nymphet R&B troupe returns at last

Since Dream's sassy number 2 hit "He Loves You Not" in 2000, this quartet has slimmed down to a trio, with singer

Melissa Schuman long gone for an acting career. But every synthetic band's strength comes from behind the scenes, and thanks to high-powered producers Rodney Jerkins, 'N Sync's Wade Robson and mentor P. Diddy himself, Dream would likely sound the same if they lost all four girls. Therefore, blame the drop in quality here on the material, full of mild and thin TLC/Destiny's Child pastiches. Toy-Jeep jams "The Real Me" and the first single, "Crazy" (featuring ubiquitous Bad Boy newcomer Loon), strike virginal poses, when it's wit and sexiness they really need.

JAMES HANNAHAM

ENON

★ ★ ★ HOCUS-POCUS

TOUCH & GO

Brooklyn indie-rock trio genre-jumble on third album

"Tie my love up till the end of time," Toko Yasuda sings on "Shave." She doesn't pant, she doesn't moan, but her broken English is subtitled with sex — as a synth beat stirs lazily, she stares down the creepy bondage fantasies of a million Japanese businessmen. Throughout this set, she trades the mic with John Schmersal, who sounds both



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more romantic (singing sweet, nasal lines over Pavement-sloppy riffs on "Candy") and more desperate (the jagged skronk of "Utz"). For the most part, his songs come wrapped in live instrumentation, while Yasuda's ride spare electronic arrangements.

Running a spectrum from glitchy electronica to No Wave to indie-pop, they change musical styles on each song: These tunes sound like they're built out of yard-sale detritus, salvaged and held together with masking tape, chewing gum, anger and sentimentality.

JONAH WEINER

ERASE ERRATA

AT CRYSTAL PALACE ★★★

TROUBLEMAN UNLIMITED

Second album from tough-as-nails San Francisco girls boasts brutally joyful noise

This ladies-only quartet fashions urgent, atonal post-punk — dance music, as long as your definition of "dancing" includes body parts twitching and spazzing. "Ca. Viewing" twists Jenny

Hoyston's political imagery, a single-string guitar line, death-disco drums and a hyperventilating trumpet around one booty-shaking bass line; the song ends in a brassy crash, finally sputtering out like an exhausted showgoer. "Let's

Be Active c/o Club Hot" adds lushness to the stripped-down music — Hoyston takes on a husky Siouxsie Sioux quality, while Sara Jaffe's otherwise frenetic, spiky guitars

stretch out on a bed of synths. It's a revealing bit of luxe, as Erase Errata quickly create chaos from beauty — and make each sound just as compelling as all the rest.

MAURA JOHNSTON

THE FIERY FURNACES

GALLOWSBIRD'S BARK ★★★

ROUGH TRADE

Brooklyn brother-sister duo make a bluesy mess

The Fiery Furnaces make the kind of racket that could come only from a family rec room. Comprising the brother-sister duo of Eleanor and Matthew Friedberger (with help from

drummer Ryan Sawyer), the Furnaces play with whimsical charm, so the band seems more like an arts-and-crafts project than an occupation. Eleanor's elastic, enchanting, confusing voice sounds alternately like a male falsetto; a bluesy diva teasing the boys on "I'm Gonna Run"; and a child having a sing-along on "Up in the North," where she conveys a quirky, engaging personality with a dry sense of humor. Like her voice, the music jumps around with ease. From sea chantey to garage-rock, vaudeville to off-kilter electronic pop, the Friedbergers make a beautiful mess down in the basement.

CHRIS RYAN

GALACTIC

RUCKUS ★★★

SANCTUARY

Jazzy jam band discovers modern funk on its fifth album

Dug primarily for their spacious, thick-spined dance grooves, the New Orleans-based Galactic turn themselves over to underground hip-hop producer Dan "The Automator" Nakamura on this aptly titled sound lab of a record. While Stanton Moore's drums sound huger than ever, and loops and treatments abound, most of the instrumentals, such as "Moi!" and "Mercamon," resemble either variations on Edgar Winter's "Frankenstein" or constipated three-minute techno-funk sketches yearning to breathe freely onstage. The septet's MVP, longtime listeners will be surprised to learn, turns out to be Theryl "The Houseman" deClouet, whose singing on several tracks, including the nostalgic "Uptown Odyssey" ("A reckless summer is a glorious mess") and the Talking Heads-like "Bittersweet," adds a yearning human touch to an otherwise overly mechanical brouhaha.

RICHARD GEHR

ASTONISHING FACT! >>

Going to a bass lesson in 1986, **FIERY FURNACES'** Matt Friedberger had his sneakers stolen by three "small but very strong girls." He went to class in his socks.



EVA MENDES
STAR OF
OUT OF TIME

THE STROKES
IS THIS IT
RCA

"The album is just fearless. They went for something that was kind of retro, yet they did it with a new twist."



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THE HANDSOME FAMILY

SINGING BONES ★★★★★

CARROT TOP

Albuquerque couple find the wriggly things under country on their ninth album

COUNTRY TURNS PSYCHO

Brett Sparks's hearty, resonant baritone belongs wholly to steady-rolling, old-fashioned country music; his wife Rennie's lyrics boil over with crawling madness, apocalyptic imagery and the detritus of cubicle life. The secret engine of their long-running collaboration is the savage friction between their form and content, which is trickier than it sounds: It has to be more Grand Ole Opry than Grand Guignol. But the Sparkses pull it off with their most sure-footedly solemn performances to date. A cover of the 1928 Bascom Lamar Lunsford track "Dry Bones" sounds freshly dark and austere, and "Gail With the Golden Hair" is such a languorous waltz, it takes a few listens to notice that the narrator's lover hears voices in her head and runs away, screaming at streetlights.

DOUGLAS WOLK

ASTONISHING FACT! >>

In the '50s, then-budding rockabilly starlet and recent high-school graduate **WANDA JACKSON** dated Elvis Presley after meeting him on tour.

WANDA JACKSON

HEART TROUBLE ★★

CMH

Some illustrious stars and friends work hard to make the rockabilly gal's comeback work

The first studio album in decades from 65-year-old rockabilly pioneer Wanda Jackson comes astutely produced by roots specialist John Wooler and shored up by a small host of well-wishers: Elvis Costello, Dave Alvin, Rosie Flores and the Cramps, who lend welcome oomph to her oldie "Funnel of Love." DCN's recent *The Wanda Jackson Show: Live and Still Kickin'* offers proof aplenty that she remains likable, lively and spunky. Additional oomph, however, is in short supply here. The material is choice, her voice full and healthy. But where unsung rocker Jackson was nearly feral and country chanteuse Jackson was soulful enough, here the only song that sounds felt rather than performed is "Walk With Me," about her personal savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

JET

GET BORN ★★★

ELEKTRA

Debut album from hairy, hard-living Australian quartet

Being called "the Australian Oasis" might not greatly help Jet's chances of seducing American audiences — but the comparisons are unavoidable. Both bands are built around pairs of siblings (in Jet's case, singer-guitarist Nic Cester and his brother, drummer Chris), and, more importantly, they share a fearless approach to musical cliché along with an occasional fondness for syrupy, "Hey Jude"-like ballads. In fairness, though, Jet frequently manage to turn in the kind of bulgy-veined, stream-lined gonzo rock that the Gallaghers haven't managed since the mid-'90s. Jet deserve respect, too, for taking audible inspiration from Oz-rock elder statesmen AC/DC on the elegantly titled "Cold Hard Bitch."

JOHN HARRIS

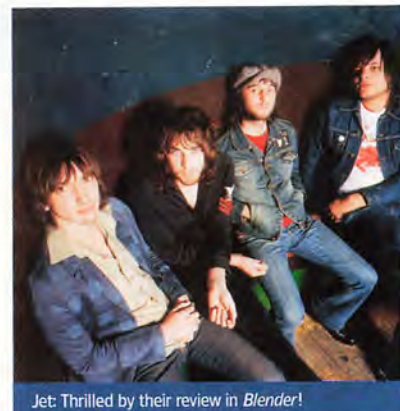
KID KOALA

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE DJs ★★★

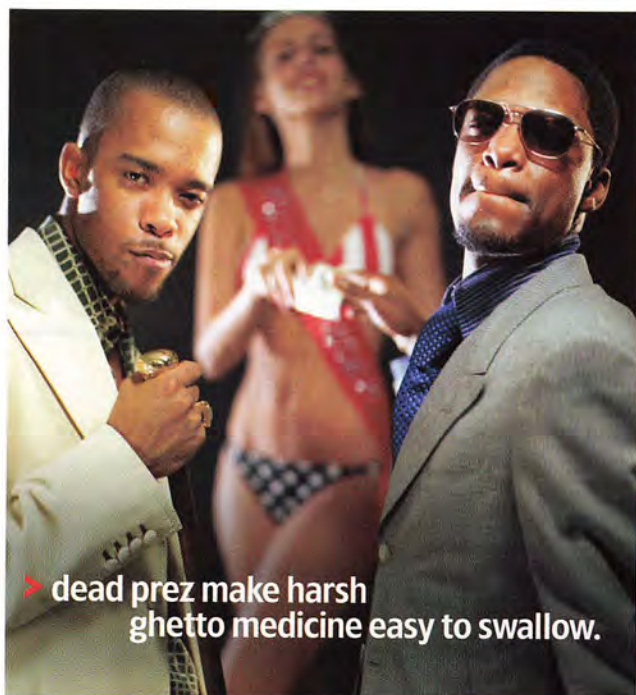
NINJA TUNE

Radiohead-approved Canadian scratchmaster puts the fun in turntable funk

Most albums by scratch-happy DJs end up sounding like wanky, over-virtuosic gibberish. Thankfully, the sophomore effort from Kid Koala (Eric San) achieves something seldom seen in the turntable-as-instrument movement: It's musically adventurous and fun. On "Stompin' at Le Savoy," the former Radiohead tourmate scratches a light-hearted, free-wheeling harmonica solo over a jazzy rhythm while rigging a teetering ska beat from guitar and horn stabs on "Skanky Panky." Koala's humor shines on the quirky "Robochacha."



Jet: Thrilled by their review in *Blender*!



➤ dead prez make harsh ghetto medicine easy to swallow.

PARTY PEOPLE

Black Power rebels return with increased pop savvy

DEAD PREZ

GET FREE OR DIE TRYIN':
TURN OFF THE RADIO, THE
MIX TAPE VOL. 2 ★★★★★

LANDSPEED

➤➤ DESPITE THE BEST efforts of the Coup and Paris, the Achilles heel of politicized rappers in the 16 years since Public Enemy first fought the power has been their inability to make compelling songs that transcend sloganeering.

Which is what has made dead prez's M1 and Stic man so intriguing. While the New York-via-Tallahassee, Florida, duo's 2000 debut, *Lets Get Free*, wasn't free of flat rhetoric, its inspired centerpieces, "Hip Hop" and "I'm a African," were crunkified gems ideal for thinking party people — Black Panther Party or otherwise.

Anchored by these mini-masterpieces, *Lets Get Free* garnered respectable sales (300,000-plus). But dead prez's M.O. of emptying lyrical clips at Uncle Sam's racist cops, schools and courts was apparently too controversial for Columbia Records, which kicked them to the curb last summer, leaving the great album RBG unreleased. Undeterred, the group went grassroots for a stirring independent collaboration with its People's Army comrades of artists and producers.

Not that these guys will be bum-rushing radio with incendiary refrains like "Slap a white boy, snuff your landlord, smash your window, break the Camcord." But songs like "Coming of Age" (a thoughtful reflection of misspent youth couched in a soulful backyard-barbecue groove), "When Mama Cries" (an acoustic guitar-laced lament of lost loved ones that suggests an activist Outkast) and the Lil Jon-esque "I Ain't Scared to Die" are ripe with memorable hooks that make their harsh ghetto medicine easy to swallow.

DPz command the biggest bang for their revolutionary buck by dispensing ideology in personal terms. If "White House Is the Rock House" too bluntly fingers D.C. as the biggest drug cartel of all, "Windows to My Soul" puts a human story behind the ire. Stic movingly recalls his brother's lifelong battle with substance abuse, crooning "It's not impossible to make a change in our lives" over a lovely piano line. Dead prez's struggles continue. But these aesthetic victories show that they're well-fortified for the long haul. **CHAIRMAN MAO**

M1'S CURRENT LISTENING

➤ FELA KUTI THE BEST OF
FELA ANIKUPALO KUTI, VOL. 1-2 CIANA

➤ 2PAC
GREATEST HITS DEATH ROW



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where stodgy dance-instruction records converse with humorless robots, and "Flu Season," where he flaunts his license to ill with a jerky series of sneezes and coughs. Kid Koala is as gifted and concept-driven as his DJ friends, but he's one hilarious class clown, too.

HUA HSI

B.B. KING

REFLECTIONS ★★

MCA

B.B. singing standards? It's enough to give you the blues

He's been crowned "King of the Blues" for more than 40 years, released more than 60 albums and had more hits than any bluesman. If Riley "Blues Boy" King, 76, wants to cut an album of sappy, string-soaked standards, who's to say he shouldn't? Sure, his voice frequently wobbles like a bent bicycle wheel; some guitar solos get handed off to Texas journeyman Doyle Bramhall II; and the songs — among them "A Mother's Love" and "(I Love You) For Sentimental Reasons" — are cornier than Indiana in August. But if you can't make bad albums just because you want to, what's the point of being King?

J.D. CONSIDINE

LAGUARDIA

WELCOME TO THE MIDDLE ★★

REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL

Pennsylvania foursome serves up reheated Radiohead on flimsy debut

If Thom Yorke made you a cheesesteak, it would probably blow. This Philly troupe's obsession with Radiohead goes down about as well, serving up hopelessly pretentious, atmospheric, keyboard-laden alt-rock. "Cuba," "Sex" and "Bull Ride" suggest raucousness and psychic grime, while "Duct Tape" and "Holy Ghost" are airplay-ready pop, but for the most part, Laguardia would rather brood and sing of (metaphoric) masturbation. Producer Brad Wood (Liz Phair, Pete Dinklage) highlights dynamic guitars and pleasing keyboards, but he can't mask the band's lack of personality. "OK karaoke!" Joshua Ostrander cries on "Banner," making reference to Radiohead's finest album. We couldn't have said it better.

JASON COHEN

JONNY LANG

LONG TIME COMING ★★

A&M

Former blues prodigy gets in touch with his inner Bryan Adams

Jonny Lang's third effort, *Wander This World*, earned him platinum sales and a cameo in *Blues Brothers 2000*; one's an accomplishment, the other is not. Five

years later, the 22-year old guitarist is finally making a play for the rock mainstream. Not that he has put the blues behind him completely, as "Give Me Up Again" and the snarling "Happiness and Misery" trade heavily on blues-rock clichés. But "Red Light" and the Bon Jovi-ish "Beautiful One" rely more on big hooks and sweeping melodies than bent notes to make their point, while Lang's rough-edged singing suggests just enough suffering to keep the heartbreak lyrics from sounding as trite as they read. Blatantly commercial, yes, but not annoyingly so.

J.D. CONSIDINE

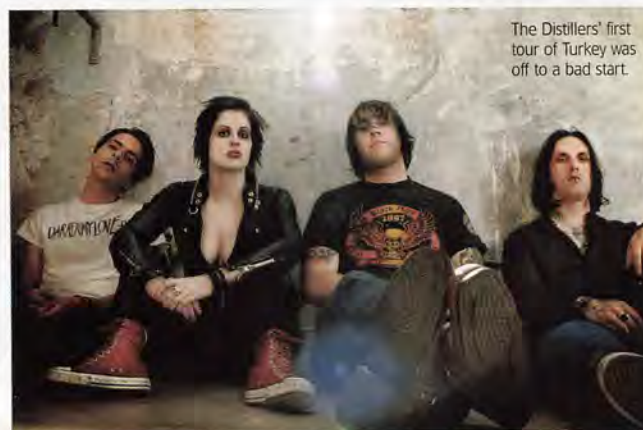
LEAVES

BREATHE ★★

DREAMWORKS

Moody Icelanders are to Coldplay what Coldplay were to Radiohead

The charmed trio Leaves played their first show two years ago in a gallery in Reykjavik, found instant success in England — not surprising, given their dreamy Britpop sound — and quickly landed a major-label deal here. Not bad for a bunch of former minor-league soccer players (before forming a band, they were all members of a team at



The Distillers' first tour of Turkey was off to a bad start.

WALL OF NOISE

Punk's new femme fatale shreds from the inside

THE DISTILLERS

CORAL FANG ★★

SIRE

THE SOUND THAT comes from the gut is what makes punk rock resonate — its scream and scrape shred pretenses, including most assumptions about what it means to behave like a boy or a girl.

Great female punks like Brody Dalle dig inside to find the place where desire escapes gender. Dalle landed the role of punk's femme fatale by leaving her husband and former namesake, Tim Armstrong of Rancid, for Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age. Once she unleashes her voice on the Distillers' third album, though, the question of women's place in rock collapses in the whirlwind of her howls.

The record's initial thrill comes from the confidence with which the Distillers and producer Gil Norton revive rock as a demolishing force. Dalle's vocal approach is in part a tribute to teacher Courtney Love. But as much as songs like "The Hunger" and the feedback-sodden "Deathsex"

recall Hole's bubbly noise baths, the music takes from the whole stew of post-punk genderfuck: the Pixies, PJ Harvey, L7, Babes in Toyland and Hüsker Dü have all left bloody fingerprints on Dalle's brain.

Dalle does assert her own emotional identity. She's mixed up and better for it: rising like an apocalyptic beast on the title track, dropping into depressive muck on "The Gallow Is God," then sparkling like a teenager in love on "Beat Yr. Heart Out" (soon to be featured on *The O.C.*, ha ha). Her violently imagistic lyrics work only as daydreams or nightmares. The able-bodied boys in her band play generic punk, leaving room for Dalle's struggle to make sense of her emotions and her impulse to tear apart what sense she does make. The Distillers' music is the sound of that brawl, fought both above and below the belt. ANN POWERS

BRODY DALLE'S CURRENT LISTENING

- ★ CAPTAIN BEEFHEART/MAGIC BAND *SAFE AS MILK* BUDDHA
- ★ PINK FLOYD *THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN* CAPITOL

home). *Breathe* has all the hallmarks of artful Icelandic rock — soaring melodies, stubborn melancholy, still-water tempos — but it trades the epic scope of their more established countrymen for a stab at pop accessibility. The lead single, "Crazy," was produced by Ron Aniello (Lifehouse, Guster), and despite the vague feeling of self-loathing ("Even though I fake it, I'm not sure I'll make it"), it's no "Creep." It's not even "Clocks."

JOHN DONOHUE

TED LEO/PHARMACISTS

TELL BALGEARY, BALGURY IS DEAD ★★★

LOOKOUT

Rising power-popper pays tribute to his influences

Ted Leo, a New Jersey songwriter who has spent the better part of a decade on the indie-punk scene, built his breakthrough third album, *Hearts of Oak*, by melding classic-rock and punk-rock traditions, Bruce Springsteen's humanism and D.C. hardcore's snarl. Following up the same year with a tongue-torturing EP, Leo pays even more explicit homage to his influences. Among the 10 tracks, this political idealist includes three covers: Accompanied only by electric guitar, he finds the somber center of Ewan MacColl's Celtic ballad "Dirty Old Town," recalling the solo electric folk that characterized his first album, and gives mournful readings of two power-pop nuggets, Split Enz's "Six Months in a Leaky Boat" and the Jam's "Ghosts." Among Leo's bursting talents, add this: rock historian.

CHRIS RYAN

LOVE

THE FOREVER CHANGES CONCERT ★★

SNAPPER

L.A. band's overrated 1967 album is reborn live onstage in London

Recorded last winter at London's Royal Festival Hall, this is a live re-creation of a 1967 album often mistaken for a work

I LOVE THIS CD!

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VOL. 2
ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM

▶ "Can't Stop, Won't Stop" is like an old-school rap joint. They just spat their verses and didn't touch up a thing. Brilliant."



Maria: Exhausted from a full day's hotness

of luminous genius. After guitarist Bryan Maclean's exquisite "Alone Again Or," singer Arthur Lee's songs were maddeningly ambivalent. Wildly over-arranged, the music deigns to settle into a groove only briefly, in the L.A. proto-punk lament "Bummer in the Summer," which brazenly recycles Them's "Gloria." Every time Lee approached lyrical comprehensibility, he suddenly turned scat singer. *Boo-bip-bip yeah!* Those who adore the original are likely to find this a treat; once unable to decide whether to be Mick Jagger or Johnny Mathis, Lee (newly released from a six-year stint in a California prison on a felony weapons violation) at last sounds comfortable as himself, supple and assured. And how to exaggerate the pleasure of hearing the former surliest man in pop thanking his rapturous audience in the tone of Mr. Showbiz?

JOHN MENDELS(S)OHN

THE MAGIC BAND

BACK TO THE FRONT ★★

ATP

Aging avant-garde all-stars rerecord cataclysmic rock moments

This utterly unessential album consists of cover versions of tracks first recorded between 1967 and 1982 by critically defied surrealist blues outsiders Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band. Long vexed by the lack of credit he was given for his substantial contributions to such innovative Beefheart puzzles as 1967's *Trout Mask Replica*, original Magic Band drummer John "Drumbo" French works out his issues by both drumming — brilliantly, as always — and slavishly imitating Beefheart's octave-leaping Delta blues wail. Completists may enjoy hearing bassist Mark "Rockette Morton" Boston and guitarist Gary Lucas roar through the instrumentals

"Alice in Blunderland" and "Hair Pie" once again, but none of these remakes surpasses the originals, which are heartily recommended.

RICHARD GEHR

MARIA

MY SOUL ★★

DREAMWORKS

Sultry Dutch singer busts out the Kleenex on tear-drowned debut

She's blessed with the superficial marks of a pop star — striking good looks, an angelic voice reminiscent of Brandy's and the production of established global hitmakers Soulshock & Karlin — but Maria is clearly more of an introvert than a diva. Minor-key melancholia dominates the Denmark-born

singer's dreary debut, as she laments unhealthy relationships ("I Give, You Take") and love triangles ("You Me and She"), wallows in heartache ("Miss You") and, on "Weakness," even assures her beau that it's OK to weep (guess she would know). Her incurable mopes wouldn't be so problematic if her material didn't meander unconvincingly between bland Euro soul and indistinct power ballads. Apart from "Lonely," a mid-tempo sitar-and-strings tearjerker, the songs here make one wish she'd just get over it already.

CHAIRMAN MAO

MANDY MOORE

COVERAGE ★★★★★

EPIC

Teen singer covers the music of her parents' era — winningly

Pop songs belong to everybody, and Mandy Moore, the singer and actress who broke onto the scene in the late '90s as a platinum-selling teen sensation, knows it. In an era when so many songs sound produced rather than

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written (Moore herself has recorded her share of them), she circles back to a selection of well-crafted material from the '70s and '80s, from XTC to Carole King. These are big songs, and Moore's voice fills them out spectacularly, without turning the enterprise into a retro stunt. Her reading of Joan Armatrading's "Drop the Pilot" is ardent and just a bit crabby, and she taps right into the raunchy seductiveness of Blondie's "One Way or Another." Moore doesn't write the songs that make the whole world sing, but she knows exactly what to do with them. And that's more than half the battle right there.

STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

VAN MORRISON

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? ★★

BLUE NOTE

Once a supernatural force of soul-rock, Van the Man has turned into a grumpy grumpy

Lately switched to Blue Note, now known as Norah Jones's label, Van Morrison hasn't altered his music or his crabby viewpoint. As itemized in "Goldfish Bowl," he's still playing "jazz, blues and funk, folk with some beat and



Me'Shell Ndegéocello prepares to give passersby a *Basic Instinct* moment.

a little bit of soul." A shuffle ("Whinin' Boy Moan"), a rockabilly toe-tapper ("Stop Drinking"), a smoky-blue jazzier ("Meaning of Loneliness"): They're nice enough. And yet, at age 58, on his thirty-fifth album, Morrison seems to have settled for the old routine. Full of bruised ego, he gets steamed up in three songs accusing the

media of shafting him (a complaint he has aired for years). But tackling the ancient blues lament "Saint James Infirmary" (guy finds girlfriend on a mortuary slab), he can't reach the emotional depth required to communicate someone else's sufferings.

PHIL SUTCLIFFE

ME'SHELL NDEGÉOCELLO

COMFORT WOMAN ★★★★★

MAVERICK/WARNER BROS.

Multi-instrumentalist trades in topic of the day for heat of the moment

Often pegged as a righteous-babe singer who tackles weighty subjects (homophobia, racism), Me'Shell Ndegéocello reveals a more emotionally exposed side on her fifth album. In deep, heavy, sexy breaths, she sings about deep, heavy sex and emotions, and it's easy to be aroused by her visceral suggestiveness. *Comfort Woman* displays the soft-spoken intensity of Ndegéocello's third album, 1999's *Bitter*, particularly on the "Love Song"

ASTONISHING FACT! >>

To complete a contract, VAN MORRISON once cut an album of gibberish, including "Blow in Your Nose" and "Nose in Your Blow."

trilogy, where she longs for intimacy over whispered acoustic tracks. Ndegéocello also plays with dub reggae, using rich, reverberating bass tones to intensify the vulnerability of her confessions. She shows the breadth of her talent and the depth of her sentiment, which has been the larger theme of her career all along.

JOSEPH PATEL

SINÉAD O'CONNOR

SHE WHO DWELLS... ★★★★★

VANGUARD

Combative Irish singer who's "retiring" offers a sprawling farewell

Forget Sinéad O'Connor's public persona — tearing up a picture of the Pope on TV, having Frank Sinatra threaten to "kick her ass" because she wanted to cancel a U.S. concert if "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played. It's always been about her voice. O'Connor's emotional range is one of the wonders of pop music: She can be warm and breathy, chilling and steely, prophetically angry, maternally tender, direct and intimate, unreachably remote. She has never sounded better than on *She Who Dwells...*, a two-disc set of new material (including covers of

TWO DAMN GOOD

Rap's restless duo go halves on a wild double album

OUTKAST

SPEAKERBOXXX/ THE LOVE BELOW ★★★★★

ARISTA

>>> AS MUCH AS the double-disc set has become a marker of hip-hop self-indulgence, it's fitting that Outkast follow up their breakthrough moment — 2000's *Stankonia* — with damned near 40 tracks of crunked-out, genre-expanding, mind-rattling, body-shocking madness. Atlanta duo Big Boi and André 3000 have always been a circus unto themselves. Now they've realized 80 minutes aren't enough for their three-ring big top.

Speakerboxxx, Big Boi's half of this two-album statement, is all aural sex — triple-time rhythms do the nasty with a Patti LaBelle sample ("Ghetto Musick"), big-band drums bang out horny horns ("Bowtie") and practically every sound known to man partakes in an orgy on "Flip Flop Rock." "Drip, drip, drop — there goes an orgasm," raps Big Boi like a space-age pimp.

If *Speakerboxxx* bends hip-hop to its limits, André 3000's *The Love Below* leaves limitations behind. Although he rhymes on "Happy

Valentine's Day" and the diary-like "A Life in the Day of Benjamin André," you'd be hard-pressed to call this a hip-hop record.

Instead, it's like a brazen remix project: Imagine vocals by Prince and Little Richard placed over lounge music and filtered through bass-heavy funk. The first single, "Hey Ya!," is an ass-shaking jam session influenced by everything from Ike Turner's soul revivals to Devo's New Wave pop.

André's deeply personal disc suggests a complex love story: a jester exposing the melancholy thoughts below his Technicolor wigs, an MC enamored with sound more than words. "Words only fucked it up more," André claims. "Now, if I'm losing you, tell me, then I'll double back."

There's no need to double back. This 'boxxx holds an explosion of creativity that couldn't have been contained in just one LP. Outkast have made insanity the norm. *kris ex*

ANDRÉ 3000'S CURRENT LISTENING

>> ERYKAH BADU
WORLDWIDE UNDERGROUND UNIVERSAL

>> ANTHONY HAMILTON
COMIN' FROM WHERE I'M FROM ARISTA



> Outkast have always been a circus unto themselves.



Sinéad O'Connor climbs stairway to heaven, tires quickly.

ABBA and the B-52's alongside reggae and old soul), demos and a wrenching concert. While she's still best known for her cover of Prince's "Nothing Compares 2 U," a 1990 chart-topper, her own songs navigate some heart-breakingly complicated experiences. As for that famous earnestness of hers (the album's full title is 19 words long), if she can live with it, so can U.

DAVID GATES

OKKERVIL RIVER

DOWN THE RIVER OF GOLDEN DREAMS ★★

JAGJAGUWAR

Desperately literate chunks of drama from Austin, Texas's backwoods orchestro-gloomsters

Sure, printing song lyrics in a CD booklet as though they were short stories is as good as a yellow-and-black sign screaming PRETENSION AHEAD. But what if the songs actually read like microbursts of serious literary energy, and hearing them sung unlocks poetry hidden on the page? And what if the ornate acoustic backgrounds — pedal-steel and Wurlitzer, mandolin and brass — are so sweepingly atmospheric that they balance singer Will Sheff, who howls like the Old 97's' Rhett Miller at his most unhinged? No song here equals the angry climax of "Lady Liberty," from 2002's *Don't Fall in Love With Everyone You See*, but that's not bad news on this third outing, where attempts at empathy edge out the fury and fear, if only barely.

JOHN DeFORE

PENNYWISE

FROM THE ASHES ★★

EPITAPH

Graying California punks are still stuck in the mohawk era

The one sign of maturity on this Hermosa Beach foursome's seventh album is "Falling Down," a tightly wound headbanger on which singer Jim

Lindberg contemplates aging. He claims, in his default urgent tone, to be "stumbling toward an early grave." That's a strange sentiment for a man whose group, formed in 1988, seems indestructible. Pennywise's galloping double-bass drum attack, on such adrenalized cuts as "Rise Up" and "Now I Know" (to name only two), and Lindberg's omnipresent whine have inspired pop-punk stalwarts like Blink-182 and NOFX. But those bands bring humor and warmth into the mix; Pennywise still rely on pro forma anti-authority anthems like the mindlessly Sex Pistols-alluding "God Save the U.S.A." At 15 years old, this band still sounds adolescent.

NICK CATUCCI

P.O.D.

PAYABLE ON DEATH ★★

ATLANTIC

Platinum-selling rap-rockers dip into reggae, fall headlong into preachiness

Apparently inspired by the success of their 2001 chart-topper "Youth of the Nation," this San Diego foursome now tackle even grander themes than teen violence, depression and kids' need for hugs. The humdrum revolutionary rhetoric of "Freedom Fighters" — which includes shout-outs to Rastafarian deity Jah, though the boys are born-again Christians — spans a typically bombastic chorus and loping reggae break. "Change the World," with its tumble of leaden guitar, batters much harder than the tired sentiment of its title, while "The Reasons" percolates with clean funk and weak rhymes. P.O.D.'s third album skimps on warmth and even grit except on a few blood-curdling screams — when, blessedly, you don't have to hear their words.

NICK CATUCCI

THE RAPTURE

ECHOES ★★

STRUMMER/DFA/UNIVERSAL

NYC trendsetters and their nerdy producers set the disco ball spinning

The Rapture couldn't write a ballad if their tight jeans depended on it.

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Happily, they make only one attempt: "Open Up Your Heart," a plodding number where singer-guitarist Luke Jenner warbles like a tortured tabby. Elsewhere, Jenner's primal howl electrifies jubilant dance-punk fusions. "House of Jealous Lovers," the best single to come out of New York City's hyped rock scene, marries clanging cowbell and hand claps to spring-loaded shards of guitar. "Olio," a sleek ode to the Cure, and "I Need Your Love," which pounds and burbles like vintage house, were also clearly commanded by hot local producers the DFA. With so many hip people in the studio, it's no wonder *Echoes* sounds like such a party.

NICK CATUCCI

ALEJANDRO SANZ

NO ES LOS MISMO ★★☆☆

WARNER MUSIC LATINA

High-minded Latin pop superstar shows why Beyoncé loves him

Alejandro Sanz, 33, is a Madrid-based singer-songwriter who has sold 18 million albums. In 2001, he presented Latin pop as white-hot basics on his *MTV Unplugged* collection; on 2002's Latin Grammy Awards show, he and a never-better Destiny's Child performed a flawless version of his "Quisiera Ser."

In the tradition of the best Brazilian singers, Sanz builds songs from earth, fire and reality — not fizz. On his sixth album, tracks such as the high-powered title track and the ballad "Sandy a Orilla Do Mundo" mix Andalusian, Cuban and international hip-hop styles. He wrestles with personal, environmental and romantic issues in a loquacious tenor that's debonair yet grounded in hard flamenco frenzies.

JAMES HUNTER

THE SHINS

CHUTES TOO NARROW ★★☆☆

SUB POP

Half-Oregon, half-New Mexico quartet makes sparkling pop-rock

Deftly balancing minimalism and luxuriance, the Shins' brisk indie-pop recalls the ebullience of mid-'60s rock while sounding entirely contemporary. Singer James Mercer's folkier numbers could be those of any unplugged indie-



The Shins' keyboardist viciously uses his bandmates as human trampolines.

rocker, but the band bolsters most of his material with cantering drums, swelling keyboards and just enough *la-la-las*. The foursome, formed in Albuquerque, made an engaging debut with *Oh, Inverted Word* in 2001, and their second album is equally charming and more consistent. Songs like "Turn a Square" evoke such masters as the Beach Boys and music hall-period Kinks — not through slavish simulation but with a kindred musicality and effervescence. "My head's like a kite," Mercer sings, and this buoyant music will carry listeners along with him.

MARK JENKINS

SOMETHING CORPORATE

NORTH ★

DRIVE-THRU/GEFFEN

Piano man and his cohorts make second album of overblown radio ballads

SoCal quintet Something Corporate are so pompous, they think their name is ironic — despite the fact that they play corporate rock like a grunge Billy Joel.

Singer-pianist Andrew McMahon, who strains as if he's having a bowel movement when emoting, also works a little too hard at his lyrics. "Wish upon a star," he breathes in "Down," "but do you know what stars are? Balls of fire... exploding in the face of God!" Nothing stings as hard as last year's semi-hit "If You C Jordan"; on such breathless cuts as "Space" and "Me and the Moon," which narrates a wife's murder of her husband, the guys slather sentiments in equally melodramatic guitar blasts and string arrangements. The result is as draining as a 60-hour workweek.

NICK CATUCCI

UNFILTERED

The queen bee of chart angst returns, no happier

PINK

TRY THIS ★★☆☆

ARISTA

WHEN SHE STARTED in 2000, Pink — a fair-to-middling R&B diva in training — seemed unlikely to change pop music. But two years ago, on *Missundaztood*, she brashly replaced the slick beats with angry, soul-baring rock, aided by new cowriter Linda Perry. Five million CDs later, she had finished a revolt, making the *Teen Vogue* crowd look more like that of *Outlaw Biker*.

Out went lip-sync pop by former Mouseketeers; in came angst, guitars, tattoos and Avril Lavigne. Everyone from Christina Aguilera to former Spice Girl Melanie C emulated Pink's confessional writing. Now with her third album, Pink has smartly navigated a way to be heard over the mass moaning that has followed her.

She has relegated Perry to a smaller role and brought in a new main collaborator, Tim Armstrong of Rancid, who shares her affinity for underdog kids and retro-rock; the guitars are raunchier, the lyrics more potty-mouthed. "Oh My God" has a duet with

painfully trendy smut-rapper Peaches, pushing the record to outer edges where Aguilera likely won't follow.

The music never loses its melodic touch, whether essaying the gutsy rock of "Last to Know" or glossy Philly R&B balladry on "Catch Me While I'm Sleeping." Perry's three songs are subpar, and the only thing missing is a killer pop hit to follow "Get the Party Started." "God Is a DJ" gives it a shot but falls short.

"I'm trouble!" Pink shouts right at the start. Middle fingers are regularly raised; recalcitrant lovers are branded "stupid fucks"; and on one occasion, her audience is encouraged to stick their tongues out. Her torment feels less compelling; in place of her thorny relationship with her parents, she recaps a sushi date that went bad and rages about wasted guest-list tickets. Vast success and influence, it's clear, haven't made Pink any less angry and dysfunctional. JAMES SLAUGHTER

PINK'S CURRENT LISTENING

JACK JOHNSON ON AND ON UNIVERSAL

RANCID INDESTRUCTIBLE WARNER BROS.



Pink: "I don't get it. Why didn't Madonna kiss me?"

SOUL POSITION

8,000,000 STORIES ★★

FAT BEATS/RHYMESAYERS

Doubt, frustration, anxiety: It's an angsta's paradise on Ohio anti-players' full-length debut

There may be 8 million stories in the naked city, but how many does hip-hop really touch upon? Blueprint, the MC half of this underground duo, is determined to sidestep hackneyed storylines for a route far less ordinary. "Run" counsels cautious living instead of street-soldier bravado, while "Fuckajob" addresses middle-management jitters in the age of corporate downsizing. "Fifteen years of experience, dependable/One merger, one meeting, expendable" — if any shots pop off here, blame an employee gone postal, not a glock-toting thug. Producer RJD2, whose solo work has drawn comparisons to DJ Shadow, wrings dread from every sample he touches: jazz, funk or even melodramatic arena-rock. Project managers everywhere will understand. **G. BEATO**

SOUTH

WITH THE TIDES ★★

KINETIC

English alt-rockers show signs of the "Coldplay effect"

South's 2000 debut — recorded for British trip-hop label Mo'Wax — was shambolic, eclectic and reminiscent of the Beta Band. But the London trio clearly has its eyes on the prize: The commercial appeal of shambolic eclecticism has waned, so South have stored away the clattering breakbeats and DJ interludes, and wheeled out sensitive, stadium-filling guitar rock. The music even comes complete with such Coldplay-approved influences as Echo & the Bunnymen and U2. South won't win any prizes for originality, but

their songwriting — tender on "Nine Lives," crashing and strident on "Colours in Waves" — is endearing enough to mask the stink of opportunistic career change.

JAMES SLAUGHTER

STATIC-X

SHADOW ZONE ★★

WARNER BROS.

After a chaotic misstep, this industrialized metal band returns to its raging melodic roots

When Static-X started watching Pantera every night on Ozzfest 2000, frontman Wayne Static had a revelation: If heavy is good, heavier must be better. So he turbocharged his band's sophomore effort, *Machine*. But

heavier wasn't better; it was atonal and monotonous, so Static hit the brakes for Static-X's follow-up, *Shadow Zone*, a record that's as contagious as it is caustic. The group's industrial-metal rhythms are still rigid and brutal like those of Ministry, but they adhere to more spacious textures and contemplative melodic vocals. "Control It" marries a primal riff with a hooky refrain, while the title track contrasts disco high-hat and a bobbing beat with barbed guitars and staccato vocals. With album number three, Static-X are back in the zone.

JON WIEDERHORN

THE STILLS

LOGIC WILL BREAK YOUR HEART ★★

VICE

Gloomy and glorious debut by Montreal kids with New York envy

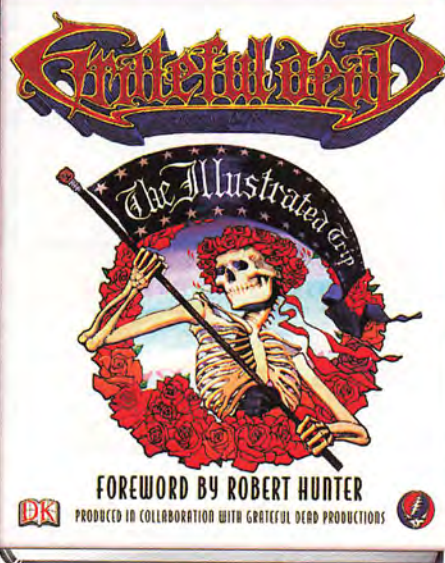
Sometimes it takes foreigners to tweak and perfect an American sound. The Stills, a four-piece from Montreal who reportedly spent the summer of 2002 crashing on couches in New York, have taken the minimalist gloom-pop of



The Stills: "Dude, I thought you had the bus pass!"

What a long strange trip it's been.

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Interpol and the Strokes and accentuated the positive, turning the stark beats and calmly pulsing guitars into cries of something like joy. On "Still in Love Song," Tim Fletcher sings of a miserable affair with such passionate longing that it sounds like liberation. "Yesterday Never Tomorrows," which closes the album, begins with static noise straight out of Joy Division but quickly turns into a sunny dance-floor daydream; it closes with a minute-plus of exhaling, expansive guitar chords. Mope-rock never felt so good.

BEN SISARIO

JOE STRUMMER & THE MESCALEROS

STREETCORE ★★

HELLCAT/EPITAPH

The leader of the Clash changed millions of lives — but that doesn't salvage the well-named "Ramshackle Day Parade"

Joe Strummer mellowed brilliantly in life. He raised three kids, never pipped himself and kept his ideals while modulating his anger. But he never focused that brilliance artistically, probably because focus wasn't his thing — the two-minute intensity of *The Clash* was an aberration. The Mescaleros' world-music wanderings proceed directly from 1981's *Sandinista!* and are best joined on 2001's *Global a Go-Go*. This follow-up was largely complete when Strummer died in 2002, only without vocals on two reportedly rousing songs that were therefore omitted — and also, oddly, without much international color or guest flourish. Strummer is probably telling Bob Marley about its folk-rock skank right now. But there's little chance Marley will return the favor of Strummer's "Redemption Song" cover, even for the standout track "Coma Girl," a lament for a lost youth culture Strummer deserves credit for sticking with, even if he couldn't lead it down the right path.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

ASTONISHING FACT! >>

TRAVIS bassist Dougie Payne has sculpted a man wearing a hat from a backstage deli tray of ham, crackers, cheese and plastic forks.



Travis regret the day they picked such a silly band name.

THE THRILLS

SO MUCH FOR THE CITY ★★

VIRGIN

West Coast rock from Irish quintet who recently opened for the Rolling Stones

To write their debut album, the Thrills moved from Dublin to California. Perhaps their record label thought the Irish quintet would return with razor-sharp observations of L.A. life from an outsider's perspective. In fact, they

returned with the indispensable news that "Hollywood kids" "sure like to dance" and that San Diego is "where all the kids go." If their lyrics stink, their music

acts like air freshener: a harmony-laden soft-rock jangle that does everything to charm the listener short of offering to help with the household chores. It's nicely done, but the relentless cheerfulness grates, and the occasional forays into country are about as convincing as Johnny Depp's Irish accent in *Chocolat*.

JAMES SLAUGHTER

TRAVIS

12 MEMORIES ★★

EPIC

On album number four, gentle Scottish quartet gets... serious?

Travis broke big in the U.K. (and medium in the U.S.) with 1999's *The Man Who*, a swoony sophomore album of brightly polished Britpop that was, unlike their tourmates Oasis, mercifully free of ego. It also didn't hurt that frontman Fran Healy sounds like Radiohead's Thom Yorke after angst management and an Effexor. While touring 2001's *The Invisible Band*, drummer Neil Primrose was nearly

paralyzed in an accident, and the dark-hued *12 Memories* reflects that experience. The lilting "Re-Offender" is about domestic abuse, and the chiming piano melodies of "Somewhere Else" are undercut with gauzy menace. Healy has also discovered politics, with admirable if clunky results ("Peace the Fuck Out"). "This is just another pop star whining," he sings on the jaunty "Quicksand." Travis may have grown serious, but at least it hasn't gone to their heads.

ANDY GREENWALD

OBIE TRICE

CHEERS ★★

SHADY/INTERSCOPE

A fantastic debut from Eminem's Detroit homie

Aside from some '44s and coke-dealing shout-outs, Obie Trice's hangup is girls, girls, girls. There are hotties who cheat, one-nighters who want more than cab fare ("Hoodrats"), one he loves ("I ain't scared of commitment/Fuck head from those bitches!"), a mother he apologizes to, those he's friends with (rare in hip-hop) and those with, er, dentures ("Got Some Teeth"). The excellent production comes strictly from rap's best: Eminem mans rippling sci-fi synths on the 50



Obie Trice knows breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Cent-guesting "We All Die One Day"; Dr. Dre traces spiraling pops across "The Setup"; and Timbaland fuses digital and bodily noises on "Bad Bitch." Trice puts a playful swing into his unlikely rhymes ("Poconos/Poke ya nose," "Venereal/Dinero/Stereo"), and when he occasionally puts on his gangsta face, he's as scary as 50 Cent in a dark alley.

JONAH WEINER

VARIOUS ARTISTS

DESERT SESSIONS VOL. 9 & 10

★★★★

IPECAC

Queens of the Stone Age singer masterminds another thrilling off-the-cuff summit of weirdos

The concept is a little like a musical version of *Survivor*: Pull together people from several musical worlds, put them in a studio in the middle of the desert, where salamander racing is the only diversion, and watch the wackiness ensue. Nominally led by Josh Homme, the guitarist and multi-instrumentalist of Queens of the Stone Age, the informal *Desert Sessions* summits have yielded amazingly diverse (and, thankfully, non-jammy) albums. This set — which features Polly Jean Harvey and Dean Ween, among others — is notable for its forays into slithery '70s Stones ("I Wanna Make It Wit Chu"), post-rock psychedelia (the throbbing, Queens-ish "In My Head... or Something") and deftly syncopated noise ("Powdered Wig Machine"). With a gonzo spirit that goes way beyond novelty, everyone involved has fun mixing things up in crazy configurations. Where else can you hear Harvey wailing on the tenor sax?

TOM MOON

VARIOUS ARTISTS

TAKE ACTION! VOLUME 3

★★★★

SUB CITY

Modern punkers rally against suicide

Volume three of this admirable series of suicide-prevention charity compilations also serves as a comprehensive snapshot of the post-millennial American punk underground. Major-label bands (Thursday, the Ataris) butt up against those both major-label-bound (the Explosion) and those major-label-opposed (Paint It Black). Pop dreamers (the Jealous Sound, Cursive, Spitalfield) link arms with hardcore screamers both interesting (Shai Hulud) and not so (Poison the Well, Throwdown). While not all of these bands are emo, they sure are emotional. The 45 songs here range from shuddering grindcore and acoustic balladry to standard dashboard confessions, yet each one is as earnest as the statistics and telephone help-line info included in the packaging.

ANDY GREENWALD

I LOVE THIS CD!



VAL KILMER
STAR OF WONDERLAND

▶ THE DARKNESS
PERMISSION TO LAND
ATLANTIC

"People are trying to figure out if they're a parody or not. The singer sounds like Freddie Mercury on speed"

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III

SO DAMN HAPPY

★★★

SANCTUARY

Misanthropic clown, the father of Rufus, keeps singing about liberty and his libido

When he debuted in 1970, Loudon Wainwright III was another in the long line of singer-songwriters branded the "new Dylan." His lone hit, the 1973 novelty "Dead Skunk," freed him from that curse and cast him as an eternal wisecracker — an image he has cultivated for three decades now. This live album, recorded in 2002, features arch musings, their bitterness hidden with broad comedy, about relationships ("True love's a scam/No wonder people end up with pets"), family ("Westchester County" — it's my Country & Eastern song) and existence ("What happens when we die — anybody?"), but Wainwright is at his best as an old topical folkie. Case in point: "Tonya's Twirls," about skating she-devil Tonya Harding ("Your parents' worst nightmare/The slut who moved next door").

BILLY ALTMAN

PAUL WESTERBERG

COME FEEL ME TREMBLE ★★★

VAGRANT

GRANDPABOY

DEAD MAN SHAKE ★★

FAT POSSUM

Rock's craggy romantic, in two guises

Nearly 15 years after the demise of the Replacements, Paul Westerberg still makes records smudged with a ragged, majestic mournfulness. *Dead Man Shake*, recorded as his alter ego, Grandpaboy, emphasizes "ragged" — this is unrehearsed roadhouse R&B, capped with a woozy version of the chest-beating show tune "What Kind of Fool Am I?" It's great fun, but *Come Feel Me Tremble* (the soundtrack for a DVD documentary on Westerberg) has more ballast. A couple of songs ("Making Me Go," "Hillbilly Junk") kick off like Replacements rave-ups, but he always circles back to the dark end of the street. "These days I think a lot about the things that I forgot to do," he sings on a trenchant cover of Jackson Browne's "These Days." Regret comes in many shades, but Westerberg never makes it boring or mopey.

STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

Blender Approved

The best new releases of the last three months



ARETHA FRANKLIN

SO DAMN HAPPY

ARISTA

With uncluttered arrangements, Franklin's best album in years puts her breathtaking pipes at center stage — it's consistent, heartfelt and fun.



THE SLEEPY JACKSON

LOVERS

ASTRALWORKS

One-man band Luke Steele has a *Mojo* editor's taste in classic rock but also pumps disco dry ice into songs that evoke David Bowie and '70s hits.



IGGY POP

SKULL RING

VIRGIN

Iggy reunites with the Stooges, reclaiming the lascivious garage-punk throne on this snarling comeback. Sum 41 and Green Day tag along.



THURSDAY

WAR ALL THE TIME

ISLAND

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Liz Phair
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→ Further proof that life isn't fair: Clay Aiken tops Outkast on this month's countdown



Brooding is so manly.

1 CLAY AIKEN "INVISIBLE" MEASURE OF A MAN

OK, his hair's still bad, but that won't stop the diminutive *American Idol* runner-up from dominating the media when his debut drops this month. On November 16, he'll play the American Music Awards (he's nominated for Favorite Male Artist) before gracing the *Billboard* Music Awards with his Broadway croon on December 10.

HOW WE DID IT

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay, and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."



POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"INVISIBLE"	CLAY AIKEN	MEASURE OF A MAN RCA
2	"THE WAY YOU MOVE/HEY YAI!"	OUTKAST	SPEAKERBXXX/THE LOVE BELOW ARISTA
3	"SO YESTERDAY"	HILARY DUFF	METAMORPHOSIS BUENA VISTA/HOLLYWOOD
4	"BABY BOY"	BEYONCÉ FEAT. SEAN PAUL	DANGEROUSLY IN LOVE COLUMBIA
5	"WALKED OUTTA HEAVEN"	JAGGED EDGE	HARD COLUMBIA
6	"STAND UP"	LUDACRIS FEAT. SHAWNNA	CHICKEN & BEER DISTURBING THE PEACE/DEF JAM SOUTH
7	"RED LIGHT-GREEN LIGHT"	LIMPBIZKIT FEAT. SNOOP DOGG	LESSISMORE FLY/INTERSCOPE
8	"HOLIDAE IN"	CHINGY FEAT. LUDACRIS AND SNOOP DOGG	JACKPOT DISTURBING THE PEACE/CAPITOL
9	"ANOTHER POSTCARD (CHIMPS)"	BARENAKED LADIES	EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE REPERE
10	"WHITE FLAG"	DIDO	LIFE FOR RENT ARISTA
11	"BIGGER THAN MY BODY"	JOHN MAYER	HEAVIER THINGS AWAKE/COLUMBIA
12	"GOT SOME TEETH"	OBIE TRICE	CHEERS SHADY/INTERSCOPE
13	"GET LOW"	LIL JON AND THE EASTSIDE BOYZ	KINGS OF CRUNK TVT
14	"HARDER TO BREATHE"	MAROON 5	SONGS ABOUT JANE OCTONEU RECORDS
15	"CLOCKS"	COLDPLAY	A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD CAPITOL
16	"FRONTIN'"	PHARRELL WILLIAMS FEAT. JAY-Z	THE NEPTUNES PRESENT... CLONES STAR TRAK/ARISTA
17	"THOIA THOING"	R. KELLY	THE "R" IN R&B COLLECTION, VOL. 1 JIVE
18	"BREATHE"	MICHELLE BRANCH	HOTEL PAPER PFAVERICK/WARNER BROS.
19	"SO FAR AWAY"	STAINED	14 SHADES OF GREY FURTEKTRA
20	"HEADSTRONG"	TRAPT	TRAPT WARNER BROS.
21	"SHUT UP"	BLACK EYED PEAS	ELEPHUNK A&M
22	"BRIGHT LIGHTS"	MATCHBOX TWENTY	MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU ARE ATLANTIC
23	"WEAK AND POWERLESS"	A PERFECT CIRCLE	THIRTEENTH STEP VIRGIN
24	"THE HARDEST BUTTON TO BUTTON"	THE WHITE STRIPES	ELEPHANT THIRD MAN/V2
25	"THE ONLY"	STATIC-X	SHADOW ZONE WARNER BROS.
26	"STACY'S MOM"	FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE	WELCOME INTERSTATE MANAGERS S-CURVE/VIRGIN
27	"12:51"	THE STROKES	ROOM ON FIRE RCA
28	"FALLS ON ME"	FUEL	NATURAL SELECTION EPIC
29	"FAINT"	LINKIN PARK	METEORA WARNER BROS.
30	"STILL FRAME"	TRAPT	TRAPT WARNER BROS.
31	"GOING UNDER"	EVANESCENCE	FALLEN WIND-UP
32	"RE-OFFENDER"	TRAVIS	12 MEMORIES EPIC
33	"OOH!"	MARY J. BLIGE	LOVE & LIFE Geffen
34	"SEND YOUR LOVE"	STING	SACRED LOVE A&M
35	"YOU AND I BOTH"	JASON MRAZ	WAITING FOR MY ROCKET TO COME/ELEKTRA
36	"MEANT TO LIVE"	SWITCHFOOT	THE BEAUTIFUL LETDOWN RED INC./COLUMBIA
37	"RIGHT THURR"	CHINGY	JACKPOT DISTURBING THE PEACE/CAPITOL
38	"SPECIAL"	WILSHIRE	NEW UNIVERSE COLUMBIA
39	"HERE WITHOUT YOU"	3 DOORS DOWN	AWAY FROM THE SUN REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL
40	"THE QUIET THINGS THAT NO ONE EVER KNOWS"	BRAND NEW	DEJA ENTENDU TRIPLE CROWN/RAZOR & TIE

6 LUDACRIS "STAND UP" CHICKEN & BEER

Move, bitch! Atlanta's afroed prankster oversaw Chingy's platinum debut and graced Outkast's new double album, and now he's supporting his third solo release with a hometown October 19 bash, a performance at the Radio Music Awards at the end of the month and an upcoming episode of *MTV Cabs*.



9 BARENAKED LADIES "ANOTHER POSTCARD (CHIMPS)" EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE

Supporting their first studio album since 1998's four-times-platinum *Stunt*, the Canuck goofsters yuk it up on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* on October 14 and then



hit the morning set with Regis and Kelly on October 23. They launch a national tour in late October in Boston.

14 MAROON 5 "HARDER TO BREATHE" SONGS ABOUT JANE

The "Buzzworthy" lead single from these Los Angeles groove-rockers landed them spots last month on *David Letterman* and



Jimmy Kimmel. These collegiate favorites will wrap up their first headlining tour on November 26.

38 WILSHIRE "SPECIAL" NEW UNIVERSE

With their major-label debut, *New Universe*, just hitting shelves, TV appearances on *Pepsi Smash* and *Craig Kilborn* under their belts and a recent national tour with Train, the gently Christian husband-wife duo



Micah and Lori Wilshire are taking their polished pop-rock nationwide. They kick off a tour supporting Seal in November.

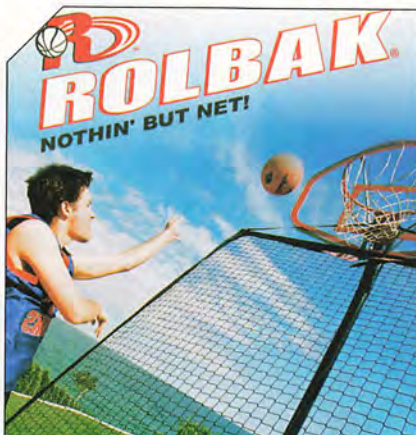
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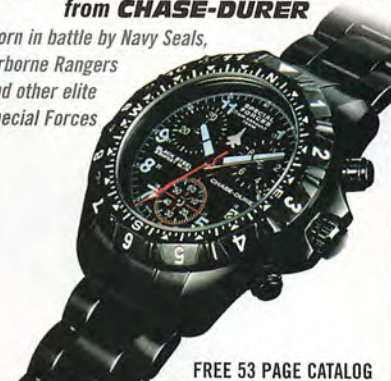
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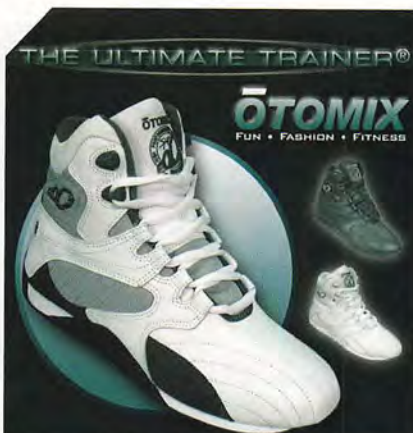
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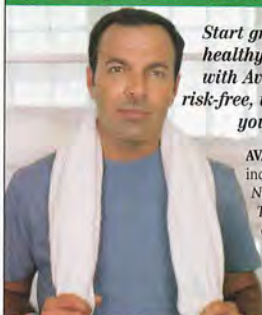
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Chuck Palahniuk
awaits arrival of
fire brigade.

"I Was Choking On Animal Hair!"

→ Pink Floyd made him eat a mink coat. He likes to listen to Toni Braxton while he writes. And med students send him free Viagra. Who says *Fight Club* author **Chuck Palahniuk** (pronounced *paula-nick*) is weird?

BY ANDREW WADSWORTH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

➤ "MARILYN MANSON HAS this skeleton of a 6-year-old Chinese boy," says author Chuck Palahniuk with a grin, sitting in a sunny park in his hometown of Portland, Oregon. "He got it out once, with the idea of making a chandelier. He's such an artsy-craftsy person, you know."

Soft-spoken and polite, Palahniuk, 41, doesn't come off as someone who would pal around with the Antichrist Superstar. Or like the kind of guy who would have penned *Fight Club*. His infamous anti-corporate debut novel immediately made him a cult icon — particularly among waiters who, like *Fight Club*'s hero, Tyler Duerden, enjoy adding something special to customers' food (one told Palahniuk that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had tasted his semen five times).

"It's less a novel than an anthology of my

friends' lives," Palahniuk says of the book, which was filmed in 1999. A bomb when released, the movie, starring Brad Pitt, became one of the best-selling DVDs ever, a favorite of nü-metallers — especially über-fan Fred Durst.

Darkness runs through Palahniuk's family history. As a 4-year-old, the author's father, Fred, hid under a bed while his father fatally shot his mother and then himself. In 1999, Fred and his girlfriend were brutally murdered in Idaho by the woman's ex-husband.

It's little wonder, then, that Palahniuk's books — such as *Choke*, *Survivor* and his latest, *Diary* — are as twisted as his taste in music. His new collection of short stories will be no exception.

"They make my editor sick to his stomach," he deadpans. "And that's always a good sign."



PINK FLOYD

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

CAPITOL, 1973

"The first time I took acid, I was 19, and I went to a *Dark Side of the Moon* laser show. I was grinding my teeth, so I picked up my scarf and started chewing. A few minutes later, I was choking on animal hair. I had picked up the mink coat of the woman sitting next to me. Before the lights came on, I bolted."



THE B-52's

THE B-52's

WARNER BROS., 1979

"I'm a lyric person, and I remember every word of a song after I hear it the first time. I first saw the B-52's on *Saturday Night Live* doing 'Dance This Mess Around.' I had never heard lyrics that were clever and upbeat but at the same time sardonic. It was the optimistic spirit of the '70s resurrected in the '80s with a far more bitter tone to it."



MASSIVE ATTACK

BLUE LINES

VIRGIN, 1991

"This album is chill music for me — music to write to. I'm writing short stories to this right now. I put this on repeat, something Andy Warhol used to do: He'd put singles on and play them unendingly to the point where the language would break down, and he would paint to that trance-like repetition."



NINE INCH NAILS

PRETTY HATE MACHINE

TVT, 1989

"This seemed like the first honest piece of music I ever heard. Trent Reznor told me he wanted to do the music for *Fight Club* — but he was just too wrapped up. After that, Trent asked if he could do the music for *Survivor*, my second book, if it ever becomes a movie — which I doubt."



NINE INCH NAILS

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

NOTHING/INTERSCOPE, 1994

"This was a continuation of my love for *Pretty Hate Machine*. There is that cut 'Hurt': 'I hurt myself today to see if I still feel. . . .' I could recite every lyric from that song, because I listened to it for days on end while I was writing *Fight Club*."



RADIOHEAD

PABLO HONEY

CAPITOL, 1993

"I love this record because it has 'Creep' on it twice. I listened to this a lot [while writing] *Choke*, because I think 'Creep' is about somebody idolizing someone else, as does the protagonist of *Choke*, a med-school dropout. Now I hear from a lot of med students. They're always sending me blister packs of Viagra."



HENRY MANCINI

BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

RCA, 1961

"Every couple has the fictional couple they identify with. For my parents, it was George Peppard and Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. This is a record that allows me to return to childhood. If I wasn't conceived to it, I was conceived shortly after the movie ended."



TONI BRAXTON

SECRETS

LAFACE/ARISTA, 1996

"This is just plain sexy, sensuous music. It's a rewrite record. Once you have a first draft down, it's easier to write to attention-getting music. And of course, Braxton is nearly naked on the cover. I love the concept of 'Un-Break My Heart.' It's the most postmodern dance song of all time."



MARILYN MANSON

MECHANICAL ANIMALS

NOTHING/INTERSCOPE, 1998

"I met Marilyn Manson on a magazine assignment, and he wanted my advice on a novel he's writing. We drank absinthe once. I'll probably go to his show when he's in town next week. It's so fascinating to see somebody exorcise his demons in such a public way."



ENIGMA

MCMXC A.D.

CHARISMA, 1990

"Music with lyrics in a foreign language is good first-draft music. It doesn't confuse my internal narrative, and I can impose my own thoughts on the lyrics. They could be singing about heartbreak, angst or drug addiction. I wrote a lot of *Survivor* to this — the Gregorian chants have this quasi-religious aspect."

AND MORE...

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UNION CHILL FACTOR
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COCTEAU TWINS HEAVEN
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EUROPEAN SKY

Spit Happens

A hundred songs, 74 bands, four CDs, two gallons of mucus



SKINNY TIES ARE back (thank you, Albert Hammond of the Strokes). So are ripped T-shirts (take a bow, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Karen O). Everywhere you look, '70s punk influences are crowding in from the fringes. Stir in an energy crisis and exploding Middle East conflicts, and the timing is perfect for Rhino's loud, exhaustive four-CD re-creation of underground rock circa 1977.

The nicknames (step forward, Danny Furious of the Avengers) sound quaint today, but late-'70s punk was built to thrill. Why wait six months to see Yes or the Eagles when you could flock to the local rock club — in New York, Los Angeles, London or Cleveland — and see bands that shared your experiences and sang about them? Or even better, learn some chords and do it yourself. Punks snubbed the ponderous megabands of the day (the Sex Pistols' Johnny Rotten wore a homemade I HATE PINK FLOYD

VARIOUS ARTISTS NO THANKS! THE '70s PUNK REBELLION

★★★★

RHINO

T-shirt). Their drugs were cheap, and the music establishment derided their heroes — the Stooges, the Velvet Underground, Gene Vincent, obscure '60s garage bands — as fuck-ups and failures.

Still, using just three chords, punks created music of startling variety that spoke many tongues — though, granted, many of them were merely versions of Iggy Pop. The Ramones were the key, setting a primitive template for others to photocopy like a fanzine, but there was more to punk than the punishing ramalama of "Blitzkrieg Bop." *No Thanks!* offers the outré (Pere Ubu's "Final Solution," a slowly suppurating boil under an evil cloud of noise) and the arty (check the nearly jazz stagger of Television's "Little Johnny Jewel"), plus great pop both lauded (the Only Ones' "Another Girl, Another Planet") and ignored (Rich Kids' underrated Wings-go-punk opus "Ghosts of Princes in Towers").

The movement to simplicity attracted older musicians — British acts the Stranglers and Nick Lowe were already grizzled, pub-stained rockers by 1976 — and welcomed women, giving air space to Penetration's strident Pauline Murray, former performance artist Exene Cervenka of Los Angeles kingpins X and the scary, man-chewing rock & roll baritone of the Runaways' Cherie Currie, all of whom are represented here. It moved at such speed that Richard Hell could be in three groundbreaking bands — Television, the Heartbreakers and the Voidoids — within 18 months. Punk was a magnet for dysfunctional, ostensibly unglamorous personalities — the witchy Patti Smith, crippled Ian Dury, pug-ugly Willie DeVille, the Germs' deranged Darby Crash — who added whatever they could: riffs, poems or vomit.

Yet punk's iconoclastic heyday was brief, roughly bookended by the



The Stranglers:
Grizzled!



Richard Hell: Style-conscious!

beginning of Television's residency at New York's CBGB in March 1974 and the heroin overdose of the Sex Pistols' Sid Vicious in February 1979. Some groups, such as Blondie, became "acceptable" stars; others (Wire, Gang of Four) inspired hundreds of bands that later became successful, from the Pixies to R.E.M., Spoon to the Rapture.

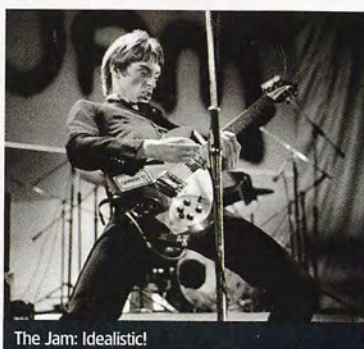
Punk didn't destroy music (as Southern California band the



What's the name of your band again, fellas?



Penetration: Feminine!



The Jam: Idealistic!



The Heartbreakers: Doomed!

Weirdos promised it would) so much as give it a vitamin shot in the ass. It also reintroduced the idea that rock could shed its narcissism and offer a telling reflection of the world. This could be as idealistic as the Jam's "In the City" (which wants to tell us "about the young ideas"), as gleefully subversive as Devo's robotic "Mongoloid" or as authentically debased as the Heartbreakers' smacked-out "Chinese Rocks."

Everywhere you look on *No Thanks!* there are attempts to infuriate, challenge and intimidate rather than simply to entertain.

Those who are prepared to shell out \$65 for this cornucopia of mild cuss words and Sears guitars should heed only three warnings: 1) Unfortunately, there's

There was more to punk than the Ramones' ramalama.



not one Sex Pistols track here; 2) The inclusion of proto-punk classics such as the Modern Lovers' "Pablo Picasso" and Iggy & the Stooges' "Search & Destroy" dilutes the otherwise heady sense of late-'70s time and place; and 3) Listening to Suicide's blood-curdling "Rocket U.S.A." while driving a car is a very bad idea.

Apart from that, *No Thanks!* is just about perfect. **TONY POWER**

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

AT FILLMORE EAST (DELUXE EDITION) ★★★★★

MERCURY

Massively expanded revamp of the Brothers' already lengthy live classic

Full of guitar solos you don't enumerate so much as weigh with an industrial-strength scale, the jam-tastic *At Fillmore East* was recorded in 1971, when the Allmans had made only two studio albums. Guitarist Duane Allman

died in a motorcycle accident three months after its release, and the familiar radio hits "Stormy Monday" and "Whipping Post" have remained definitive proof of the band's improvising powers. This appropriately titled deluxe edition doubles the running time of the original, adding six tracks ranging from the 30 minute-plus "Mountain Jam" to an under-three-minutes (what were they thinking?) "Midnight Rider." Thirty years on, it's difficult to think of anyone who has done this kind of thing quite so well. CLARK COLLIS

BIG STAR

BIG STAR STORY ★★★★★

RYKODISC

Premium '70s-era guitar-pop in a cut-rate package

The Velvet Underground of power-pop, Big Star were heard by almost nobody yet seemed to influence nearly everyone. Alex Chilton's early-'70s Memphis quartet — later a trio and finally a duo — served as a thoroughfare from the Beatles and the Byrds to R.E.M. The first of the group's three studio albums was '60s-style pop-rock; the second got freer and more raucous; and the third was doomy, weird and quite lovely. This non-chronological 18-song overview

mixes all three and adds live tracks, alternate versions, solo songs and one new tune, the agreeable but uninspired "Hot Thing." The collection's cover is ugly and discographical details are lacking, but songs like "September Gurls" still represent a pinnacle of power-pop invention, grace and mystery. MARK JENKINS

BILLY BRAGG

MUST I PAINT YOU A PICTURE?: THE ESSENTIAL BILLY BRAGG ★★★★★

RHINO

Two-CD career set from Marxist British singer-songwriter

In the two decades he's been making music, Billy Bragg has acquired an unshakeable reputation for the politicized music that used to be known as "agit-pop" — but as the best of this collection's 40 tracks prove, it's his love songs that truly demonstrate his talent. From unrequited high-school obsession ("The Saturday Boy") to sexual awakenings ("The Warmest Room," "A Lover Sings") through thirtysomething



Big Star's songwriting secret: scarves!

contentment ("The Fourteenth of February"), Bragg has soundtracked just about every aspect of the mating game. Those who want to destroy Starbucks should find plenty of inspirational material, but anyone in search of romantic honesty will be ecstatic. JOHN HARRIS

CULTURE CLUB

KISSING TO BE CLEVER ★★

COLOUR BY NUMBERS ★★★★★

WAKING UP WITH THE HOUSE ON FIRE ★

VIRGIN

The rise and fall of Boy George

They enlivened the Reagan years by raising important issues like "Is George a

THE SCORE >>

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK

HIPPIE SELLOUT

Onetime blues-rock bore who took the money and ran

STEVE MILLER BAND

YOUNG HEARTS: COMPLETE GREATEST HITS ★★★★★

CAPITOL

>> BEFORE EMBARKING on his impeccable string of empty-headed 1970s hits, Steve Miller made the kind of calculated career decision that either made rock & roll or helped ruin it, depending on your cultural politics: He abandoned rock for pop.

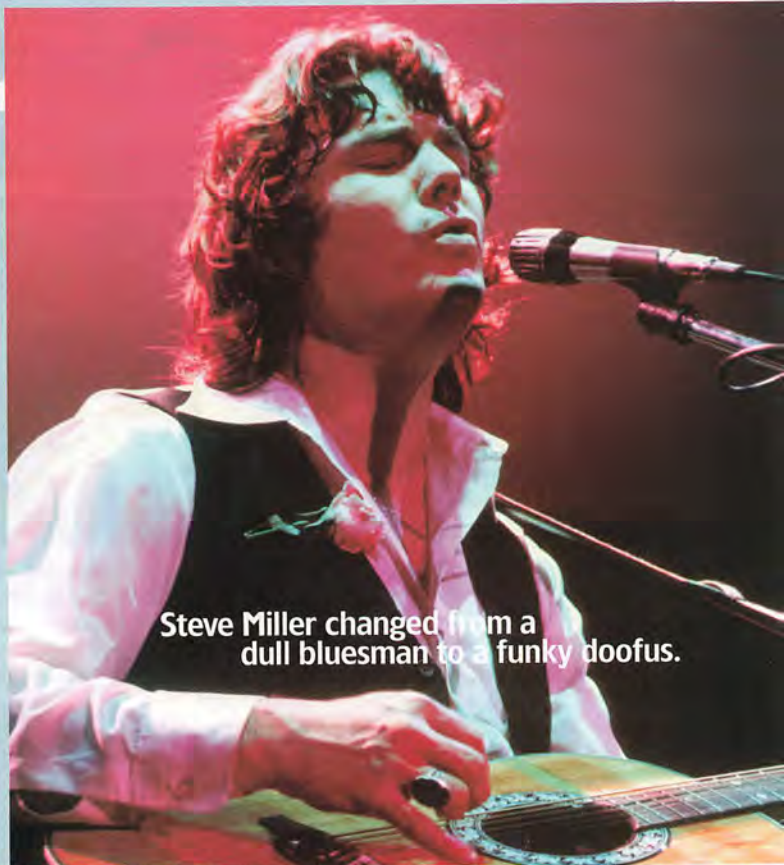
Like so many stoned white boys of his era (Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Fleetwood Mac's Peter Green, to name a few), Miller, born in Milwaukee, grew up infatuated with the grit and grace of American black music. He moved to blues hotspots Dallas and Chicago, and then in 1966 to hippie mecca San Francisco, where the Steve Miller Band Mach 1 (featuring future disco dandy Boz Scaggs) opened regularly for Jimi Hendrix and the Doors, and eventually released seven very credible if dull psychedelic-blues records. If, say, you can't get enough of Quicksilver Messenger Service, these will be your cup of mushroom tea.

Luckily for the rest of us, Miller

abandoned authenticity in 1972 after breaking his neck in an auto wreck. Laid up for eight months in his parents' home, he built a recording studio and emerged a funky, grinning doofus with a new sound so absolutely streamlined it could have made ABBA jealous.

Gone were the windy blues solos — or any solos, for that matter. In their place, on the blissful mid-'70s hits "Jet Airliner," "Rockin' Me," "Jungle Love," "Take the Money and Run" and "Fly Like an Eagle," was a formula for AOR gold: whooshes of headphone synths, escapist bumper stickers masquerading as lyrics and sneakily funky drumming (hip-hoppers including Biz Markie, the Geto Boys and Shaggy have been on to Miller for some time).

Miller cultivated an anonymity that fit perfectly with the emerging facelessness of corporate rock, not to mention disco; the airbrushed Pegasus that often adorned his album sleeves is far more recognizable than Miller himself. Add one superlative last proof of meaninglessness, 1982's "Abracadabra," and you have as fine an argument for "selling out" as you can ever hope to hear. CRAIG MARKS



Steve Miller changed from a dull bluesman to a funky doofus.

boy or a girl?" and "Why is he singing 'I'm a comedian'?" (He wasn't. He was singing "Karma Chameleon," which is even sillier.) But these reissues, prompted by Boy George's Broadway musical, *Taboo*, make it clear that his multicultural Hasidic-reggae collective was emphatically a singles outfit.

Kissing to Be Clever feels like a long haul through dated dance-pop until the effortlessly lovely "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?" *Colour by Numbers* featured the persona-creating "Karma Chameleon" plus generally better songs. *Waking Up With the House on Fire*, a 1984 flop, was a hookless mess. The one notable track ("The War Song") is conspicuous only for its painful lyrics: "War is stupid/And people are stupid!"

ANDREW HARRISON

ELEVENTH DREAM DAY

PRAIRIE SCHOOL FREAKOUT
★★★★

THRILL JOCKEY

Chicago cult heroes' 1988 full-length debut is rich in guitar melancholy

Together 20 years, Eleventh Dream Day are something of an indie-rock Yardbirds, an influential "band's band" with members known for other things: Bassist Douglas McCombs cofounded avant-proggers Tortoise in 1990, while singer-drummer Janet Beveridge Bean has been with alt-hillbillies Freakwater even longer. Recorded live in six hours — three spent on a failed attempt to fix a buzzing amp — *Prairie School Freakout* ladles boy/girl harmonies over suspenseful rock & roll drenched in death (by rope, drowning, shower stall and gunfire). Rick Rizzo and Baird Figi's hot-needle guitar duels earned comparisons to Television and the Velvet Underground, the highest possible praise for a guitar-grit band.

JASON COHEN

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION
★★

ISLAND

Mick Jagger's former girlfriend goes from '60s angel to punked-up witch

Originally a virginal-voiced object of desire reportedly courted by no less

than Bob Dylan, Marianne Faithfull later did a stint as a derelict heroin addict before reappearing a dozen years after her first mid-'60s hits. No longer murmuring demurely, she alternately croaked and bleated as though she had much to prove, and *Broken English* was 1979's most notable comeback album. That nearly everyone who is anyone (most recently Beck and Billy Corgan) has sought to work with her over the decades has more to do with her image as Everyone's Favorite Survivor than with her musical gifts. Her glorious 1987 version of "Strange Weather" (which

Tom Waits cowrote) aside, it wasn't until she hooked up with Angelo Badalamenti, David Lynch's favorite composer, in the mid-'90s that she actually learned how to sing, as shown here by the ravishing "Sleep."

JOHN MENDELSSOHN

THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

LIVE AT BERKELEY ★★★★★

EXPERIENCE HENDRIX

In the midst of Vietnam-era student demonstrations, a guitar genius sets the stage on fire

From the Hendrix estate's label, this previously unreleased 1970 concert nails the era and History's Greatest Guitarist in all their contrary rapture. Introducing "Machine Gun," Hendrix dedicates it to "all the soldiers fighting in Berkeley." He means students. Then he has a second thought: "Oh, yeah, and all the soldiers fighting in Vietnam." Despite this stoned carelessness, his performance is disciplined and passionate, even though — after dumping the Band of Gypsies — he's back to playing a set of his early Hendrix Experience songs. Three months from dying, he plunges his hippie dreams and aching-heart despair deep into "Hey Joe," "Stone Free" and "I Don't Live Today" with



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GANG BANG
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AND ALLY McFEAL



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Lord, I Apologize gives us 14 hilarious sketches recorded live in Omaha, NE. The disc includes a bonus cut — "Toddler Mail" — where Larry finds himself answering letters from toddlers! Mark Tremonte, the famed guitarist from the multi-platinum group Creed, closes out the CD with Larry playing guitar on the title track/song, "Lord, I Apologize."



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R.E.M., from left: Bill Berry, Peter Buck, Mike Mills, Michael Stipe

STILL STANDING

In the second half of their career, arty southerners stretch out

R.E.M.

IN TIME: 1988–2003:
THE BEST OF R.E.M. ★★★★★

WARNER BROS

WITH 1988's "STAND," an extraordinary demonstration of pop obnoxiousness, this hits collection begins after R.E.M. — four determined proto-indie-rockers from Athens, Georgia — had fought the Prince-Madonna '80s pop wars for seven years. They were heroes to college-radio listeners who liked their notion of turning Simon & Garfunkel into Led Zeppelin, of mixing folk gorgeousness with hard rock and a little junk-shop experimentalism.

Unlike most '80s acts, R.E.M. didn't endorse rock's intergalactic arrogance; instead, they emphasized intimacy, modesty and imperfection. Hypnotized by curious southern folk art, by the peeling painted barn doors that were disappearing from the rural South, R.E.M. pioneered the "distressed" aesthetic.

Many of their ideas were as questionable as hardcore bands' dreams of pushing all music to ear-splitting volume. But R.E.M. made enduring songs of their nutty persuasions.

The apotheosis is "Losing My Religion," R.E.M.'s highest

recorded achievement. The writing, vocals and arrangement aspire to a grandeur that had previously made the band nervous. The track is not about the cute mandolin that skitters around the intro; it's about the mandolin as conveyor of isolation and transcendence. On ballads such as "Nightswimming" and "Everybody Hurts," R.E.M. discovered the beautiful applications of gauzy folk-rock textures.

Born from the now worn-out notion of cool, they ended up emulating those who had replaced them as indie's coolest. They shot for Nirvana with "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?," ending up with a buzzy, very un-Cobainish charm. After the retirement of linchpin drummer Bill Berry, they chased after Radiohead's musical adventures on flop singles such as "E-Bow the Letter."

On the new songs "Bad Day," a jangling rocker, and "Animal," a rangier and noisier boomerang of sound, they return to the familiar elements of their own airy jumbles. Both songs offer fine restatements of the folk beauty, rock propulsion and newly aged textures that R.E.M., for more than 20 years, have so commandingly swirled together.

JAMES HUNTER



Michael Stipe: Losing his religion, hair

visceral results. For newcomers, it's a meaty live companion to *Smash Hits*; for true fans, it's absolutely compulsory.

PHIL SUTCLIFFE

REVEREND CHARLIE JACKSON

GOD'S GOT IT ★★☆☆

CASEQUARTER

Ultra-raw guitar gospel from the '70s South

Between 1970 and 1978, singer-guitarist Reverend Charlie Jackson made a half-dozen gospel singles on his own Jackson Records and on the microscopic New Orleans label Booker Records (run by another reverend out of his basement) while also playing on a few other people's albums. Virtually all of his '70s recordings are collected here, including a couple of deep-gospel blues sung by Laura Davis. It's all impossibly rough and haphazardly recorded, with Jackson's bellow and rusty-barbed-wire guitar accompanied only by a couple of hand-clapping, whooping friends. His gift is for power, not finesse, but he's got the spirit feel — no matter how muffled, it's impossible to argue with the violent, sweating, vein-popping intensity of Jackson's two-part testimonial "The Goodness of God."

DOUGLAS WOLK

GRACE JONES

THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION ★★★★★

ISLAND

Studio 54 icon; invented S&M disco

Nostalgia's lens may view Grace Jones as a dark-skinned, androgynous vestige of New York's hedonistic '70s and '80s, but given pop's fascination with the different manifestations of New York punk, the statuesque Jamaican émigré



Grace Jones: "Help me find my contact lens!"

is overdue a retrospective. Her albums (covered here from her 1977 debut, *Portfolio*, to 1982's *Living My Life*) featured theatrical monologues over disco and New Wave grooves delivered with a burlesque combination of S&M sass and deadpan indifference. Top reggae production duo Sly & Robbie helmed some of her most famous tracks, such as the raunchy club hit "Pull Up to the Bumper," fueling Jones's suggestive romp with their own rhythmic sexiness. What, you thought she got cast in *Conan the Destroyer* based solely on singing ability?

JOSEPH PATEL

R. KELLY

THE "R" IN R&B COLLECTION, VOLUME 1 ★★☆☆

JIVE

Lopsided hits set from the 24-times-platinum "Pied Piper" of R&B

R. Kelly seemed to spend the first half of his career shirtless, on his knees, dripping love oils. His cries for booty rang with hammy anguish, making him the slow-jam poster boy. In 1998, he began a transformation into Cristal-poppin' party monster, dicing his lush croon into hooks and fitting them into jerky club hits — impossibly, he has maintained this bacchanalia straight through the kiddie-porn scandal. Unfortunately, this collection over-

BURIED TREASURE

UNEARTHING LOST CLASSICS >>

JAWBREAKER

24 HOUR REVENGE THERAPY ★★★★★

TUPELO: 1993



Jawbreaker, in a rare moment between sobs

At the Drive-In counted this San Francisco trio among their heroes, while Saves the Day owe them their pop fizz — emo forefathers Jawbreaker dunked punk into

a bucketful of tears before anyone else. His voice like a bread knife, Blake Schwarzenbach takes to the songs on this fantastic third album as if they're tin cans, hacking away at breakups, breakdowns and self-doubt. "I'm not a punk!" he bellows, crashing and transforming the insular underground with his big heart and bigger hooks. Jawbreaker disbanded in 1996, but they claim their legacy in a generation of lonely teenagers' whines. ANDY GREENWALD

emphasizes the former period. Sure, 1993's "Your Body's Callin'" is irresistible, its guitar writhing upward before two kicks pump it back down — but for the most part, the down-tempo glut is snoringly tedious. The excellent new "Thoia Thoing" humps an exotic Timbaland-style bounce as Kelly playfully changes his melody and timbre each verse. Wait for the presumably party-heavy volume two.

JONAH WEINER

MOTÖRHEAD

STONE DEAF FOREVER! (★★★)

METAL-IS/SANCTUARY

Five discs and 99 songs from rock's unlauted wicked uncles

Motörhead are often perceived as the "metallest" of metal bands, and this career-spanning collection backs up bandleader Lemmy Kilmister's protestations to the contrary. On a good day, Motörhead sound like Chuck Berry gone very bad, playing bloody-nosed rock & roll at trepanning volume. Their late-'70s and early-'80s albums, with drummer Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor and guitarist "Fast" Eddie Clarke completing the unholy trinity, are still deemed the definitive Motörhead — and for good reason. While most of the later album cuts and radio sessions here bluff it on speed and volume alone, disc five's live numbers demonstrate that Motörhead with Philthy Animal behind the drum kit swung like mad. Nobody needs all this — least of all Lemmy's spoken-word rendition of "Orgasmatron," which sounds like a dying man wheezing on a hospital bed — but among the din, there's a great rock & roll band trying to get out.

DANIEL KRAUSS

MICHELLE SHOCKED

SHORT SHARP SHOCKED (★★★★)

MIGHTY SOUND

Squatter/former mental patient brought punk attitude to protest songs

The original *Short Sharp Shocked* captured singer-songwriter Michelle Shocked's Cinderella transformation from folk-festival phenom to major-

label recording artist. After emerging in 1986 with a "field" recording made live on a Walkman, Shocked incited a hailstorm of overnight-sensation hype and spent a year working on the restless introspections that filled her first studio release. This two-disc expansion adds lots of songs from her freewheeling gigs, as Shocked experiments with phrasing (on a growly "If Love Was a Train") and makes the scenery of her childhood come alive ("Memories of East Texas"). In the introduction to "Remodeling the Pentagon," she telegraphs her mission, telling the audience, "If you're with me on this, you'll sing the last line of each verse, and if not, I'm gonna stand up here and look like a typical folk singer." These rarities suggest that Shocked, at her sharpest, was anything but typical.

TOM MOON

CAETANO VELOSO

THE BEST OF CAETANO VELOSO (★★★★★)

NONESUCH

A great Brazilian singer-songwriter who's smoother than Sting will ever be

Though he's revered as an innovator of tropicalia, the movement that brought



Yes, taking a rare break between drum solos

rock-style insurrection to late-'60s Brazilian pop, Caetano Veloso didn't invent whole new styles so much as discover radical ways to reshape existing forms. The buoyant lightness of his singing alters his surroundings — his samba has extra silk in it, and his liquid bossa nova pulls the essence of a brooding singer like João Gilberto into a futuristic tableau. This set, dedicated to

recordings Veloso has made since the early '90s, provides an excellent introduction to the bold, mature artist who's obsessed with texture and hue — there are several deliciously understated ballads here ("Manhatã," his yearning valentine to Manhattan, is among the best), as well as lavish orchestral pieces ("Na Baixa do Sapateiro") and a few of the drum corps-plus-voice experiments that have shown him to be an astute scholar of hip-hop.

TOM MOON

YES

CLOSE TO THE EDGE (★★)

TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS (★★)

RELAYER (★★★)

GOING FOR THE ONE (★)

RHINO

A song based on *War and Peace*? A duet for harp and pipe organ? It could only be '70s prog-rock

After "Roundabout" gave them their first Top 20 hit in 1972, Yes responded to singles success by running fast in the opposite direction, writing long suites full of fiddly solos. *Close to the Edge*, released on the heels of "Roundabout,"



(SUG-3980)

Just Because I'm a Woman

SONGS OF DOLLY PARTON

"Dolly Parton is a gifted artist cleverly disguised as a media superstar and sex-bomb. She does it all without breaking a sweat, or a nail. Long may she reign!" — JOAN OSBORNE, from the liner notes to JUST BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN

Marking the 35th anniversary of the icon's first RCA solo album — JUST BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN — this various artist collection of the same name spotlights the songwriting talent of one of the most gifted performers in American music history. Dolly has penned over 3000+ songs and fresh, new covers of many of her all-time classics are included on this dazzling tribute.

ALISON KRAUSS — "9 to 5"
MELISSA ETHERIDGE — "I Will Always Love You"
NORAH JONES — "The Grass Is Blue"
JOAN OSBORNE — "Do I Ever Cross Your Mind"
SHELBY LYNNE — "The Seeker"
MINDY SMITH — "Jolene"
EMMYLOU HARRIS — "To Daddy"

SHANIA TWAIN WITH ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION — "Coat Of Many Colors"
KASEY CHAMBERS — "Little Sparrow"
SINEAD O'CONNOR — "Dagger Through The Heart"
ALLISON MOORER — "Light Of A Clear Blue Morning"
ME'SHELU N'DIGECELLO — "Two Doors Down"
DOLLY PARTON — "Just Because I'm A Woman"

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THE GUIDE REISSUES

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RADIOHEAD
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"It's kind of rock and
kind of beautiful. It's
trippy and serene."

was their highest-charting album, and relies heavily on Jon Anderson's aging-choirboy vocals, despite a persistent lack of melody. *Tales From Topographic Oceans* (1974), originally released as a double album with one song per side, is predictably long-winded, but it's mildly impressive thanks to Steve Howe's speed-demon guitar. Keyboard maniac Rick Wakeman left before *Relayer* (also 1974), and replacement Patrick Moraz's synths lent symphonic luster to the Tolstoy-inspired "Gates of Delirium." Wakeman — who in the interim had staged an ice-skating spectacle based on the story of King Arthur — returned to add bombast to *Going for the One* (1977), which, sadly, was like adding salt to anchovies.

J.D. COSIDINE

ROB ZOMBIE

**GREATEST HITS: PAST, PRESENT
AND FUTURE ★★★**

GEFFEN

Rock's grooviest ghoul looks back

In *White Zombie* and on his own, Rob Zombie's vein-popping nightmares often draw blood, but it's almost always fake. For nearly two decades, this fan of trash culture has used music as a wild-eyed outlet to vent his *Blade Runner*-meets-*Barbarella* obsessions and cultivate a macabre persona. This 19-track collection — which dates from 1992's breakthrough "Thunder Kiss '65" to a pair of new tracks — bursts with calculated aggression. The shred-filled rage can sound ominously rad (1994's bilious "Feed the Gods" is as sinister as a slasher flick). Zombie's howl is negated on tunes with novelty cameos from Howard Stern and Lionel Richie. Still, more often than not, his cartoon horror shtick clicks. Zombie transforms the disco chestnut "I'm Your Boogie Man" into a creepy stalker anthem, and "Living Dead Girl" takes a step beyond industrial waste with a Beck-like East Indian pastiche. As freak shows go, it's tough to beat.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

Blender Approved

The best reissues of the last three months



DURAN DURAN
DURAN DURAN

CAPITOL

Stars of the gaudy New Romantic movement, Simon Le Bon & Co. fused dance-club narcissism and hard-rock muscle on their fizzy debut.



TELEVISION
MARQUEE MOON

RHINO

In 1977, these CBGB revolutionaries unleashed their surreal garage-rock vision with this beautiful, piercing and chaotic debut full of guitar genius.



JEFFERSON AIRPLANE
AFTER BATHING AT BAXTER'S

RCA/BMG HERITAGE

Guitars red-line under three-part harmonies on the Bay Area popsters' 1967 album. A cultural revolution captured in all its doomed splendor.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE HARDER THEY COME

HIP-O/ISLAND

Before even Bob Marley, the jump R&B grooves on the soundtrack to this 1973 cult film gave America its first hit of full-power reggae.

REISSUES IN BRIEF BY JON YOUNG



Lynyrd Skynyrd: "Don't worry, guys — I've got you on the next flight out of here."

CLINT BLACK

ULTIMATE CLINT BLACK ★★★★★

RCA NASHVILLE/BMG HERITAGE

Emerging in 1989, one step ahead of Garth Brooks, this former construction worker deftly splits the difference between country tradition and new-Nashville fluff. His lonesome wail brings a mighty ache to standard laments like "A Bad Goodbye," a duet with Wynonna Judd that could make stone weep. But enough with the cowboy hat, already.

GLEN CAMPBELL

THE LEGACY (1961-2002) ★★★★★

CAPITOL NASHVILLE

An ace session guitarist (Presley, Sinatra) and temporary Beach Boy, the Arkansas-born Campbell hit big in the late '60s with sweeping country-tinged pop like "Wichita Lineman" and "By the Time I Get to Phoenix." Though this four-disc, 80-song survey lasts too long, it showcases his graceful handling of superior material, including Allen Toussaint's gorgeous "Southern Nights."

EL DeBARGE

ULTIMATE COLLECTION ★★★★★

HIP-O/MOTOWN

Leaving the family group DeBarge in the mid-'80s, handsome crooner Eldra was poised for a superstardom that didn't happen. It wasn't from lack of trying: Luminary producers on this bittersweet collection include Jermaine Dupri, Quincy Jones and Burt Bacharach. Chart-worthy or not, the delicate bedroom soul of "Love Always" and "Broken Dreams" offers the perfect catalyst for midnight carnality.

THE GRATEFUL DEAD

THE VERY BEST OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD ★★★★★

RHINO/WARNER BROS.

Never mind the long-winded jam band; here's the radio-friendly pop Dead, 17 tracks' worth. Despite a slew of liabili-

ties — from thin production to laughably weak vocals — guitar deity Jerry Garcia & Co. occasionally mustered the energy to fashion convincing Americana, notably the shambling (anti-drug!) "Casey Jones" and "Touch of Grey," their moving (and only) hit single.

GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS

PLATINUM AND GOLD COLLECTION ★★★★★

BUDDHA/ARISTA/BMG HERITAGE

While some Motown stars stumbled outside the label's confines, Gladys Knight flourished. These '70s highlights, plus two doo-woppish early-'60s hits, show why: With her warm, husky singing, she made gospel-toned soul at its most modest. Even when arrangements veer toward nightclub slickness, Knight navigates hit ballads such as the tender "Midnight Train to Georgia" with grace and persuasive style.

LYNYRD SKYNYRD

THYRTY: THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION ★★★★★

UTV

The greatest southern rock band — sorry, Allmans! — drew its bluesy punch from swarming multiple lead guitars and whiskey-voiced Ronnie Van Zant, a populist philosopher disguised as a barefoot redneck. This two-disc set falls short of umpteen prior compilations by including songs by the dumbered-down, Ronnie-less later Skynyrd. That's Van Zant turning over in his grave now.

PANTERA

THE BEST OF PANTERA ★★★★★

RHINO/ELEKTRA

After the fatuous hair metal of the '80s, Pantera's blast-furnace aggression seemed promising. But their dreary power chords and puke-stained vocals rarely transcended rote bluster. Covers of Black Sabbath's "Planet Caravan" and "Hole in the Sky" boast songcraft missing elsewhere. Oddly bland for all the uproar.



Gladys Knight & the Pips: "Hurry up. These tuxedos are due back in 20 minutes."

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EVERY
ORIGINAL CD
REVIEWED

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

➤ Many rock stars pretend they live on a fabulous, faraway planet of which we can only dream. But Bruce Springsteen's music is grounded in the everyday world — his talent is for turning ordinary lives into poetry. New Jersey's best-loved export since Sinatra was a scuffling Dylan-alike until the full-tilt exuberance of *Born to Run* landed him on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* on the same day in 1975. Fans dubbed him "The Boss" because he ran a mighty beast called the E Street Band, but his style swings from stadium bombast to folk-club intimacy. He's a "cool rockin' daddy in the USA," as one of his songs goes, but he's much more besides. By Paul Du Noyer

BLENDER APPROVED

BORN TO RUN COLUMBIA, 1975

★★★★★



HIS
BEST
ALBUM

Pulsing with the elation of a young man whose time has arrived, this is Springsteen's breakthrough. With future manager Jon Landau assisting in the studio, the E Street sound is suddenly Spector-esque, huge and dynamic. The lyrics are no less epic — surging celebrations of hot city streets, emotional hunger and the urge to burst free. Formerly an introverted songsmith, Springsteen learns to touch on universal chords, and he plays them like a champ.

Standout tracks: "Born to Run," "Thunder Road," "Jungleland"

DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN COLUMBIA, 1978

★★★★★



With his career stalled by three years of legal disputes, Springsteen reassesses the youthful bravado of *Born to Run* and emerges a more serious man with adult concerns and a brooding nostalgia for lost optimism. Country-music influences and Biblical references creep in, while social themes confirm his symbolic switch from leather jacket to blue collar. Brooding or not, though, he could still rock whole city blocks.

Standout tracks: "Adam Raised a Cain," "Prove It All Night," "Darkness on the Edge of Town"

BORN IN THE U.S.A. COLUMBIA, 1984

★★★★★



The album that took the Boss from mere rock star to outright national icon, with a written-to-order video hit in "Dancing in the Dark" and the much-debated title track (song of social protest or anthem of defiant pride?). Plenty of plain, goofy fun ("Darlington County") and sexual sweatiness ("I'm On Fire") help round out the package. The post-*Nebraska* shift to big production values and red-blooded human-interest stories helped make this the Springsteen album that the whole world owns.

Standout tracks: "Born in the U.S.A.," "I'm On Fire," "Glory Days"

GREAT

THE WILD, THE INNOCENT & THE E STREET SHUFFLE

COLUMBIA, 1973

★★★★



On his second album, Springsteen transitions from trainee troubadour to confident bandleader. The arrangements are brasher and more complex, and the

band is unafraid to try anything, from R&B to ersatz jazz. The songs are a little overwrought, but they would find their full stature in later stage performances.

Standout tracks: "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)," "Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)"

THE RIVER COLUMBIA, 1980

★★★★



A stadium-pleasing double CD of gruff, good time rock & roll, with the E Street boys sounding like the biggest bar band in the universe. There are many reflective

moments here, too, and thanks to Springsteen's famous rambling prologues, they became live favorites as well.

Standout tracks: "Independence Day," "Hungry Heart," "Stolen Car"

NEBRASKA COLUMBIA, 1982

★★★★



Tiring of the tour-and-studios routine, Springsteen holed up in his bedroom with a tape recorder and cut these starkly unvarnished tracks. The desolate sonic landscape is matched by bleak tales of murder, lust and fate: The title track concludes, "There's just a meanness in this world."

Standout tracks: "Nebraska," "Atlantic City," "Highway Patrolman"

TUNNEL OF LOVE COLUMBIA, 1987

★★★★



Its theme, Springsteen said, was "the more intimate struggles of adult love," and though he denied it was autobiographical, everyone concluded

that there were problems with his new marriage to model Julianne Phillips. Within a year, he was embroiled in a divorce.

Standout tracks: "Tougher Than the Rest," "Brilliant Disguise," "Valentine's Day"

The *Playgirl* shoot was not going well.



CHECK IT OUT

GREETINGS FROM ASBURY PARK N.J. COLUMBIA, 1973
★★★



His debut has an eager charm, but it tries too hard to fill Bob Dylan's shoes with self-consciously poetic fables of New Jersey street life.

Promising songs trip over themselves, but some critics detected a fine new writer learning his craft.

Standout tracks: "Blinded by the Light," "Spirit in the Night," "It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City"

LUCKY TOWN COLUMBIA, 1992
★★★



"Living Proof," a last track recorded for *Human Touch*, sent Springsteen on a fresh songwriting spree, resulting in two albums that he released simultaneously. Recorded virtually solo, *Lucky Town* is the more spontaneous and tuneful of the two. Neither album, though, sold as much as Springsteen was accustomed to.

Standout tracks: "If I Should Fall Behind," "Souls of the Departed," "My Beautiful Reward"

GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA, 1995
★★★



"Streets of Philadelphia," written for Jonathan Demme's movie *Philadelphia*, makes a first-class addition to the familiar Bruce biggies. But the curious inclusion of four mediocre rarities dampens the impact this set should have made.

Standout tracks: "Born to Run," "Hungry Heart," "Streets of Philadelphia"

THE RISING COLUMBIA, 2002
★★★



Finally reunited with the E Street Band, the Boss was suddenly overtaken by 9/11 and the expectation that he would address it in song. He rises to the challenge so

magnificently here that the rest of his new material sounds ordinary by comparison.

Standout tracks: "Into the Fire," "Empty Sky," "The Fuse"

BE CAREFUL

LIVE/1975-85 COLUMBIA, 1986
★★★



A triple CD that celebrates the peak years of the E Street Band, when crowds moored "Brooooo" and his gigs were legendary for their firepower and length. Guitarist Steve

Van Zandt bows out for Nils Lofgren, and — hell-ooo — here comes a redheaded backing singer named Patti Scialfa. . .

Standout tracks: "The River," "Because the Night," "Jersey Girl"

HUMAN TOUCH COLUMBIA, 1992
★★



The companion volume to *Lucky Town* finds only pianist Roy Bittan surviving an E Street purge, as Springsteen adjusts to a new marriage (to Scialfa) and to

fatherhood. The songs are tender but not generally among his best.

Standout tracks: "Human Touch," "57 Channels (And Nothin' On)," "I Wish I Were Blind"

THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD COLUMBIA, 1995
★★



Nearly a *Nebraska 2*, as Springsteen opts for stripped-back arrangements and dark meditations on the plight of American underdogs. There are some affecting tales of migrant lives, inspired by John Steinbeck's

The Grapes of Wrath, but many find the music's austere style unapproachable.

Standout tracks: "The Ghost of Tom Joad," "Across the Border"

TRACKS COLUMBIA, 1998
★★★



Nurturing this four-CD retrospective helped Springsteen through a period of writer's block. The bootleg-style anthology collects various outtakes and

unreleased songs plus obscure B-sides to form a shadow history of his career — too much for the uncommitted, but it's a feast for Boss completists.

Standout tracks: "Sad Eyes," "Gave It a Name," "Part Man, Part Monkey"

FOR FANS ONLY

IN CONCERT: MTV PLUGGED COLUMBIA, 1993
★★



Perversely for an artist who is happy playing solo, Springsteen scraps the acoustic format of MTV's *Unplugged* series to rock out with a massive band. A brash

party spirit pervades, though the songs are mostly from his less-well-regarded albums *Lucky Town* and *Human Touch*. The transient lineup behind him makes this set unrepresentative of Bruce live.

Standout track: "Red Headed Woman"

18 TRACKS COLUMBIA, 1999
★★



An unsatisfactory sampling of the *Tracks* extravaganza, yet it offers a few new songs to lure collectors — commercial exploitation masquerading as generosity.

Standout tracks: "Pink Cadillac," "Part Man, Part Monkey"

LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY COLUMBIA, 2001
★★



A two-disc souvenir of the E Street Band's 2000 reunion, captured for a TV special. Funkier and more intimate than the sprawling *Live/1975-85* but

lacking most of his really popular songs.

Standout tracks: "The River," "American Skin (41 Shots)," "Jungleland"



Bruce Springsteen: "Eek, a mouse!"

FURTHER LISTENING

FOLKWAYS: A VISION SHARED COLUMBIA, 1988
★★★

Springsteen joins U2 and Bob Dylan in this tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, declaring his allegiance to the American folk tradition that has increasingly been his inspiration.

FURTHER VIEWING

THE COMPLETE VIDEO ANTHOLOGY 1978-2000 COLUMBIA, 2001
★★★★

A double DVD of 33 clips, mostly from live shows but also souvenirs of his MTV phase in the '80s — including a stage jive with a teenage Courteney Cox in Brian De Palma's video for "Dancing in the Dark."

FURTHER READING

SONGS By Bruce Springsteen AVON, 1998
★★★★

A sumptuous presentation of song lyrics, stellar photography and, best of all, Springsteen's revelatory memoirs of the songwriting process, album by album.

"Simon, that had better be a harmonica in your pocket."

★
THEY'RE
BACK!
BACK!
★

Simon Le Bon:
"Be patient — I'll
get you a table as
soon as I can."

John Taylor's
miniaturization ray
finds its target.

Old Romantics

Still pretty after all these years, a re-formed Duran Duran party like it's 1984

DURAN DURAN

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK CITY

AUGUST 27, 2003 ★★★★★

➤ THE FIVE ORIGINAL members of Duran Duran are 25 years older than when they formed the band, and collectively, they've gained lots of wrinkles and more than a few pounds. But neither age nor time diminishes one enduring fact: Supermodels love Duran Duran.

A crowd of 1,500, mostly female, is screaming hysterically for the recently re-formed Duran Duran, and the upper level of Webster Hall is bouncing under the weight of enthusiasm. Among the celebrities (Moby, Debbie Harry, Famke Janssen), a heavily pregnant Christy Turlington stands next to her husband, Edward Burns, and at each chorus — "Hungry Like the Wolf!" "Is There Something I Should Know?" "Ordinary World!" — she dreamily sings along. Someone get this woman a slot on *I Love the '80s*!

For the next ear-bleedingly loud 90 minutes, the downtown New York nightclub becomes a strange, parallel terrarium in which

Eminem has yet to be invented and Fred Durst is years away from his first tantrum. The band gleam as though assistants have been polishing them all day long. Elegantly dressed in black and white, singer Simon Le Bon stands erect, chest out, hands on hips, doing what he was born to do: pose, preen and pout like the shameless narcissist he is. "It's good to be back, New York," he says.

Duran Duran live again. Formed in Birmingham, England, they were ridiculous poster boys for the U.K.'s New Romantic costume show, selling 60 million records worldwide.

Though rarely taken seriously, they made some brilliantly wide-screen, if eternally pompous, pop music.

As in all fables, though, the good times turned to rot. By the mid-'80s, the band had begun to hemorrhage, and over the next few years, each of the unrelated Taylors — guitarist Andy, bassist John, drummer Roger — quit amid varying degrees of acrimony. Le Bon and keyboardist Nick Rhodes, meanwhile, limped pointlessly on. "We were undoubt-

edly a much paler version," Le Bon admits to *Blender* the next afternoon. "When the original lineup split, the magic went away."

Now, as middle age looms and thoughts turn to retirement funds, the five originals are back. Earlier this summer, with some new songs in their man-purses, they went back on tour. Four dates in Japan drew scenes of hysteria; Los Angeles and Las Vegas proved similarly triumphant.

Tonight, Duran Duran look surprisingly trim, although Le Bon sweats through his shirt despite moving less than a runway model. The show is enthusiastic, creating a sense of nostalgia so heady it's practically narcotic. But occasionally, the set list irritates. They ignore nearly a half-dozen top songs: no "Save a Prayer," no

"Reflex," not a note of "A View to a Kill." The two unsuitably earnest new songs — "What Happens Tomorrow" and "Virus" — don't augur well for their 2004 album.

Expectedly, showstoppers come exclusively from the years 1981 through 1986. "Girls on Film," "Notorious" and "Rio" are kitschy, aerodynamic and playful, each a celebration of excitement as an end in itself. Then there is "The Wild Boys," surely the most determinedly bombastic pop song ever recorded.

"We are born again!" Le Bon crows, contemplating the reunion. Perhaps: Duran Duran haven't recorded a good song since the luscious "Ordinary World" 10 years ago. But tonight, at least, they're strong enough to bring an entire decade back to life. *NICK DUERDEN*

HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF
PLANET EARTH
COME UNDONE
WHAT HAPPENS TOMORROW
NEW RELIGION
VIRUS
WAITING FOR THE NIGHT BOAT
IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD
KNOW
ORDINARY WORLD
NOTORIOUS
WILD BOYS
CARELESS MEMORY
RIO
WHITE LINES
GIRLS ON FILM

HOW'D YOU LIKE THE SHOW? WEBSTER HALL



NEELA COVELL

28, CHARITY WORKER,
NEW YORK

"I've been a fan since fifth grade, though I grew out of them. But tonight they were fabulous. I'd buy their new album."



SAEED BUTT

29, PHYSICIAN, NEW JERSEY

"I've delayed flying to London for a wedding for this. I've seen every tour they've ever done, but this was the best yet. They were fantastic."



SUE AVILA

34, REALTOR,
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"I was disappointed that they didn't play many of their best songs, like 'Save a Prayer.' But John Taylor is still cute."

★
THE NEW
JEFF
BUCKLEY
★



Damien Rice, living up to folk-music standards of "grooming"



"Is that *all* you want me to sign?"

Folk Hero

Romantic savior of serious songwriting struggles to survive heat and hype

DAMIEN RICE

PENN'S LANDING, PHILADELPHIA

JULY 20, 2003 ★★☆☆

➤ EVEN BEFORE Damien Rice has sung a note, the crowd at the WXPB-FM Singer Songwriter Weekend — a two-day marathon of musical earnestness at a riverfront plaza in Philadelphia — seems skeptical. It's the middle of a hot Sunday afternoon, and the Irish troubadour has just been introduced as the recipient of the non-commercial radio station's first "Emerging Artist" award. A scruffy 29-year-old who has played mostly small clubs on this, his first U.S. tour, Rice seems genuinely astonished as he looks out at more than 9,000 music snobs waiting to see if he deserves the hype as the next important song poet.

He sneaks into "Delicate," the aptly named ode that opens his debut, *O*. It's extremely quiet, a reverie that demands more attention than 9,000 people usually give at once. The crowd leans in, following every breath,

and Rice seizes the opening — his phrases are fragile and small, tinged with throwaway jazz inflections and out-of-tempo strumming, supported by brooding cello and a whispered beat from his four-piece band. The carefully cultivated mood is shattered during the last verse when he breaks a string.

Rice scampers off to make the necessary repairs, turning over the stage to bandmate Lisa Hannigan, whose vocals balance the headstrong attitude of Rice's songs with much-needed humility. Rice returns, and in the middle of an

equally dreamy new song called "Insane," another string snaps.

Rice, who was part of a moderately successful rock band, Juniper, before beginning his solo career in Dublin coffeehouses several years ago, doesn't seem perturbed. Onstage, he and his empathetic musicians follow a simple edict: They play without a set list, allowing them to shift gears spontaneously.

Besides, Rice tells *Blender* a few days later, he practically will



"I'd like to thank the members of the Academy. . ."

the freak twin breakages. "If I don't change my strings, they break, and I didn't change my strings because I had a bad, apathetic taste in my mouth that day." He felt uncomfortable with the aura of competition that surrounded his award, and with the long line his fans waited in just so he could "spend five seconds

with them" and sign their CD.

So he went onstage feeling "melancholic," he says. "It made me think back to the moment I recorded the songs — the feeling where you're a little desperate for someone to give you an answer."

Introspection and a questing spirit infuse his tightly wound folk, seemingly borne from long nights spent listening to Jeff Buckley and Nick Drake. Though he appears unbothered by the delays, he has an edge. His voice swells with a

lover's boiling-point anger. Then he's the victim of a cosmic misunderstanding — when he asks, "Lord, can you hear me now?" in the middle of "Cold Water," he sounds less like the Verizon cellphone pitchman than a loser turning to the heavens in desperation.

As he and Hannigan trade verses on the set-closing "Volcano," their interactions are entrancing — strong enough to erase any whiff of early-career hype, passionate enough to make you want to hear them in less pressurized surroundings. They transport the sublime melody to a higher plane, where lofty notions of commitment and devotion are celebrated — and where petty concerns, such as the competitive aspects of Rice's award, fade into the background. *TOM MOON*

Rice seems astonished by the "next song poet" hype. ★

HOW'D YOU LIKE THE SHOW? PENN'S LANDING



CHRIS SEIZ

18, PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY

"He's much better in person than on CD. His playing is extremely passionate. I've never seen anyone break two strings during a show."



CHRIS BORKOWSKI

18, PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY

"Amazing. He relates to all ages, from kids to adults in their forties. His lyrics and music link the generations."



MEREDITH KIMBALL

18, PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY

"Really moving. Very real. I know that he feels it as he sings it, and he transmits that to the audience."

➤ The film relies on Ferrell's knack for playing harmless doofuses.

THE GOOD!

MR. BIG STUFF

A stupid Christmas movie for kids — only with jokes for adults. And Will Ferrell in yellow tights and a pointy hat! By Eric Alt

ELF

DIRECTED BY Jon Favreau

STARRING Will Ferrell, James Caan, Zoëy Deschanel, Bob Newhart

➤ ON THE SURFACE, *Elf* appears to be a silly, family-friendly piece of holiday comedy fluff. That's because, essentially, it is. Underneath, though, there's a neatly wrapped box labeled WILL FERRELL'S BIG CHANCE. Having already salvaged a few years of *Saturday Night Live* and been the best thing in other people's mediocre movies (*Zoolander* and, let's face it, *Old School*), *Elf* is Ferrell's shot to take the lead for the first time.

He stars as Buddy, a human raised at the North Pole by Santa's elves. When the 30-year-old, six-foot-five Buddy starts to get an inkling that he's "different," he is told the truth by his adopted elf father (Bob Newhart, in a hilariously deadpan performance).

Buddy soon waves goodbye to the North Pole and sets out into the world to find his birth parents (James Caan plays his cranky pops). With this minimal plot set in motion, the rest of the movie revolves around Ferrell in yellow tights, naively trying to bring thoughts of sugarplums and candy canes to the harsh and cynical world of New York City, with predictably comedic results.

With *Swingers*' Jon Favreau directing, this otherwise kid-targeted flick manages to load in

the nods and winks to adults. The deliberately crappy-looking North Pole, for example, is styled after '60s Claymation sets (complete with Burl Ives–style talking snowmen), and one particularly funny moment has Buddy mistake an, er, vertically challenged man for a fellow elf.

The rest of the film relies heavily on Ferrell's knack for playing harmless doofuses as well as he does. (Who else could pull

off the line "I'm a cotton-headed ninnymuggins!?" Well, maybe Christopher Walken.) With a supporting cast who wisely let the big guy take center stage (although we could have done with more of Zoëy Deschanel, who plays a department-store elf who falls for Buddy), the result is a warm, fuzzy and slightly corny but enjoyable effort. With luck, from now on "starring Will Ferrell" won't seem such an odd notion.



"Faster, old man, or the reindeer gets it!"

LOW EXPECTATIONS

Three tragic tales of Hollywood midgets: In real life, it's not all Christmas presents and sleigh rides

HERVE VILLECHAIZE

Scaramanga's butler in *The Man With the Golden Gun*, Villechaize was choosy about his roles — he apparently wrote "No elves or Santa's helpers, please" on his résumé. In 1982, he was nominated

for a Golden Globe for his role as Tattoo on TV's *Fantasy Island*, but he left, and work dried up. Suffered from depression. Shot himself in 1993.



"A little something, sir?"

DAVID RAPPAPORT

Famous for his role as part of a midget gang in Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits*. Had many TV guest appearances, including on the yuppie legal drama *L.A. Law*, but was depressed by Hollywood's failure to take midget actors seriously. Shot himself in 1990.

GARY COLEMAN

Colossally successful as Arnold on *Diff'rent Strokes* at age 10. But of the \$18 million in career earnings his adoptive parents placed in a trust, Coleman received only \$1.3 million. He became a security guard and twice attempted suicide with sleeping pills. Recently ran for California governor.



Gary's no-frills airline wasn't a success.



HONEY

DIRECTED BY Bille Woodruff

STARRING Jessica Alba, Mekhi Phifer, Lil' Romeo, Lonette McKee

BAFFLINGLY, ONE OF the writers of Mariah Carey's piteously bad *Glitter* now offers another disastrous local-girl-makes-good-through-the-power-of-music movie. On the verge of her big break as a choreographer for a music video, Honey (Alba) loses out by refusing to put out for an industry bigwig. What does she do? She goes home and opens a dance school for (of course!) underprivileged youngsters. The story — despite being 90 percent rewritten by Alba to make it more "real" — includes both the student who must be saved from a life of crime through the magic of dance, and the one good man who will win her heart.



TUPAC: RESURRECTION

DIRECTED BY Lauren Lazin

STARRING Tupac Shakur

NEARLY A DECADE after his death comes this detailed portrait of the writer, rapper and actor, whose sensitive-guy/thug split personality — along with his unsolved murder — made him an icon. Co-executive produced by his mother, *Resurrection* tells Tupac's story using readings of his poems and private journals, along with interviews and concert footage. The adulation is a bit heavy in the first half, building him into a martyred social activist and political target, but the second half exposes his self-admitted arrogance and immaturity. A well-rounded depiction of a flawed man.

Blender Approved

The best movies of the last three months



AMERICAN SPLENDOR

Amazingly, Harvey Pekar's real life looks even more twisted and bleak than his comics. And no less funny for it.



SCHOOL OF ROCK

Jack Black finally finds a home in this hilarious and warm mix of *Dead Poets' Society* and *This Is Spinal Tap*.

AND THE REST...

DON'T MISS



21 GRAMS

DIRECTED BY Alejandro González Iñárritu

STARRING Benicio del Toro, Sean Penn, Naomi Watts, Charlotte Gainsbourg

THE PITCH A car accident unites an ex-con (del Toro), a terminally ill college professor (Penn) and a reformed drug addict (Watts).

THE VERDICT It sounds like a real wrist-slitter, but with this cast in the hands of the hotshot Mexican director of *Amores Perros*, it promises to be shocking and complex.



MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

DIRECTED BY Peter Weir

STARRING Russell Crowe, Paul Bettany, Billy Boyd

THE PITCH After a surprise French attack nearly sinks his vessel, crafty Brit Captain Jack Aubrey (Crowe) sails off for revenge.

THE VERDICT A Napoleonic swashbuckler with spectacular battles and the greatest captain-officer friendship since Kirk and Spock.



SHATTERED GLASS

DIRECTED BY Billy Ray

STARRING Hayden Christensen, Chloë Sevigny, Rosario Dawson, Steve Zahn

THE PITCH The true story of prodigious young writer Stephen Glass (*Star Wars*' Christensen), who wrote stories for top newsmagazines — many of which he completely made up.

THE VERDICT An Ivy League version of *Catch Me if You Can*. The real lesson: Lie to the right people, and they'll make a movie about you.

DON'T RUSH



THE MATRIX: REVOLUTIONS

DIRECTED BY Andy and Larry Wachowski

STARRING Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving

THE PITCH The third and final installment of the po-faced, chop-socky messiah myth is a showdown battle for a devastated planet.

THE VERDICT With collective expectations lowered by *Reloaded*, Keanu and crew have nowhere to go but up. Expect more long black coats and existential mumbo-jumbo.

DON'T BOTHER



THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

DIRECTED BY Marcus Nispel

STARRING Jessica Biel, Eric Balfour, Andrew Bryniarski, Erica Leerhsen, Jonathan Tucker, Mike Vogel

THE PITCH Not another sequel — a remake of the original 1974 slasher film about youngsters who meet a psycho with power tools.

THE VERDICT A well-crafted remake — but the original's grainy amateur feel was scarier.



RADIO

DIRECTED BY Mike Tollin

STARRING Cuba Gooding Jr., Ed Harris, Debra Winger, Alfre Woodard

THE PITCH Warm-hearted, true story of the lifelong friendship between a retarded southern black man and a white high-school football coach.

THE VERDICT It's Gooding's bid to make us forget about *Boat Trip* and win this year's Oscar for Pretending to Be Mentally Deficient.

Alia Gentler (Honey), Jeffrey Newbury/Corbis Outline (Tupac: Resurrection), John Clifford/HBO-Fine Line Features (American Splendor), Andrew Schwartz (School of Rock), Jimmy Nunez/WideWorld.com (Dignity), Jim Sheridan/Cineplex Features (21 Grams), Stephen Vaughan/SPSP (Master and Commander), Jonathan Wenk (Shattered Glass), Jason Bland (The Matrix: Revolutions), courtesy of New Line Cinema (The Texas Chainsaw Massacre), courtesy of Sony Pictures (Radio)



Jimmy Eat World, baffled by the sudden disappearance of their singer

LEAP OF FAITH

Forget the music — this journey into emo is all about the lifeline the scene throws its devoted fans. By Dorian Lynskey

NOTHING FEELS GOOD PUNK ROCK, TEENAGERS, AND EMO

By Andy Greenwald

★★★★ ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN, \$15

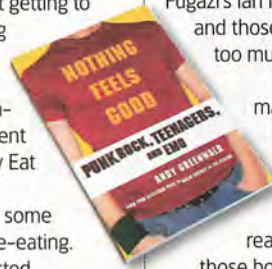
➤➤ FINDING A MUSICIAN who cops to being emo is like tracking down Bigfoot, so music journalist Andy Greenwald has his work cut out getting to the genre's bleeding heart. It's not as if he can fall back on rock & roll debauchery, either; excitement levels on the Jimmy Eat World tour bus, for example, peak with some spontaneous cookie-eating.

To the unconverted, everything about emo is off-putting: the gauche lyrics, the overheated emotions, the insufferable self-righteousness. Skeptical but intrigued, Greenwald does his best to find out what the fuss is about, puzzling over the legacy of little-

known cult heroes Rites of Spring and Sunny Day Real Estate, accompanying high-school seniors to a Dashboard Confessional show and spending far too long in Internet chat rooms.

Apart from a long, fascinating encounter with Dashboard's Chris Carrabba and a fleeting glimpse of Weezer's Rivers Cuomo, there's precious little star power here. Some key figures, including Fugazi's Ian MacKaye, won't talk, and those who will don't offer too much insight.

None of that really matters, though, because this thoughtful, inquisitive book is, like the genre itself, really about the fans: those bored, sensitive, Net-savvy teens for whom emo is a vital lifeline. Fundamentally, Greenwald concludes, emo isn't about knowing this or that obscure D.C. hardcore band, but about easing the pain of thin-skinned adolescence. It's *The Catcher in the Rye* with guitars.



CHARLES PETERSON TOUCH ME I'M SICK: PHOTOGRAPHS

Introduction by Eddie Vedder.
Essay by Jennie Boddy

★★★★ POWERHOUSE BOOKS, \$40

Charles Peterson's scabrous, motion-blurred, black-and-white pictures are so synonymous with

Seattle grunge that it's a surprise to visit the place now and find it in color, in focus and stinking of neither beer nor sweat. Peterson shared the stern,

no-sell-out ethos of bands like Nirvana, Mudhoney and Pearl Jam, and they gave him the kind of access that today's bands' careful image control precludes. Most of these 92 images are thrilling live shots; others are comical backstage pictures (there's one of Beth Liebling from Hovercraft snoozing on a suitcase labeled BORED). The most powerful feature Kurt Cobain — as a tiny figure lost on a stage, or wearing pajamas and patently smacked out. One breathtaking nine-page sequence from 1990 sees him pitch backward into Nirvana's drum kit, scattering band and fans. Rock photos don't come more exciting.

ANDREW HARRISON

DA CAPO BEST MUSIC WRITING 2003

THE YEAR'S BEST MUSIC WRITING
ON ROCK, POP, JAZZ, COUNTRY
AND MORE

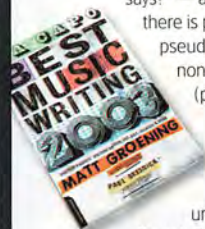
Guest edited by Matt Groening.
Series edited by Paul Bresnick

★★★★ DA CAPO PRESS, \$17

Your natural response to the authoritative title might be "Oh, yeah? Who says?" — and to be sure, there is plenty of pseudo-academic nonsense here (poet/lawyer Lawrence Joseph is pretentious and unreadable on Detroit R&B). But it's

not all NPR on Xanax, and the best of it is quality investigative journalism. The standout stories — on the early days of N.W.A, a mischievous look at a pop wannabe missing the boats marked both BRITNEY and AVRIL, and a disturbing profile of James Brown — come from nonmusic magazines. But rocking chaos is as absent as teenage pap about Justin and Christina. This is a comfy-slippers, post-grad read.

ANDREW HARRISON



EMOTION IN ACTION

By Lou Reed

★★★★ EDITION 7L, \$50

There is a school of thought that because someone a) is a pop star, b) has read a pictureless book and c) is capable of dressing himself without assistance, he is thus an all-consuming polymath. Lou Reed is the principal of this school, and here he has reinvented himself as a photographer. *Emotion in Action* is a lavishly packaged setting for a few (think a dollar an image) of Reed's photographs. He claims they form a

dream sequence, but given that his brief introduction notes that "My feeling for rhythm and song dictates that these photographs should not be titled," we'll never really

know. What we do learn is that Reed likes a blurred shot; he likes Manhattan; and he likes a blurred shot of Manhattan more than anything else in the world.

JOHN AIZLEWOOD

LOW DOWN JUNK, JAZZ AND OTHER FAIRY TALES FROM CHILDHOOD

By A.J. Albany

★★★★ BLOOMSBURY, \$24

Joe Albany was a great musician and a lousy father, a not so uncommon combination. A dashing West Coast bebop pianist who cut some crucial sides with his hero, Charlie Parker, Albany spent most of his adult life living out a doomed beatnik reverie of late-night jam sessions and nonstop heroin use. Perhaps unwisely, he also tried to single-handedly raise his daughter, A.J., and it's their surprisingly tender relationship she recounts in this beautifully written, gimlet-eyed memoir. A J.'s childhood would make

Fellini blush — as Dad ties off in the next room, she befriends a carnival of hookers, dwarves, witches, suicidal circus clowns, blind war veterans, porno directors, defrocked priests, speed freaks and one sweet, elderly neighbor who has taught her poodle to pleasure her "nasty old cooze." In lesser hands, such florid material could feel hackneyed and sentiment-



tal; instead, this tale of Albany's hard-knock life reads as both impossibly fun and impossibly dangerous, something like great jazz itself.

CRAIG MARKS

PLAYBACK

By George Martin

GENESIS PUBLICATIONS, \$375

Often dubbed the "fifth Beatle," George Martin was the debonair Parlophone Records producer (and former navy flyer) who nurtured the mop-tops' transformation into history's most creative sonic force.

Playback could be his epitaph — a limited-edition, ego-stroking, 12-by-9 inch tome in a presentation box that looks (a bit, anyway) like a mixing desk — but lordy, is it dull. Martin's

vague, sentimental reminiscences — some of them Beatle-centric, many more about such British dreckmeisters as Matt Monroe — are occasionally quaint (John Lennon "became a different person later on when he was on heroin and whatever else") but reveal nothing significant. Meanwhile, the accompanying CD, including — argh! — Martin's own harmonica concerto, is cheese of a very ripe sort. Martin helped the Beatles change the world, but *Playback* makes you wonder if he even noticed.

TONY POWER

VINYL JUNKIES

By Brett Milano

ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN, \$14

High Fidelity gave record collecting Hollywood glamour, but apparently it wasn't very realistic. That's how it seems in this catalog of music-



GONNA DO GREAT THINGS THE LIFE OF SAMMY DAVIS, JR.

By Gary Fishgall

SCRIBNER, \$26

Sometimes you wonder if Sammy Davis, Jr. was put on Earth simply to prove that Frank Sinatra had a good side. Many bad things are said about Ol' Blue Eyes, but he was a loyal friend to Sammy. We remember Davis as the runt of the Rat Pack, and he owed his career to Sinatra's support — even a sympathetic biographer like Gary Fishgall can't rescue him

from the man's shadow. Davis's triumph was to overcome the obstacles of bigotry, insecurity and the loss of an eye.

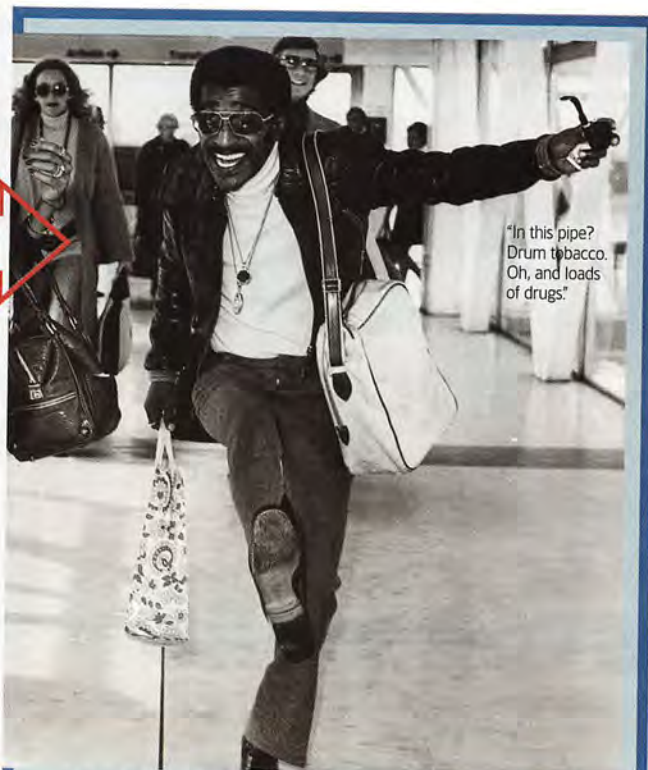
But his achievements as a dancer, cabaret act and TV guest are largely lost to posterity, while his recorded legacy is at best mediocre.

PAUL DU NOYER



fixated oddballs, such as the lesbian Olivia Newton-John freak or the mentally ill Manhattanite who apparently owns every disco record ever made. You wouldn't want them as roommates, but author Brett Milano weaves their stories into a touching depiction of a weird alternate musical universe.

JAMES SLAUGHTER



THE BEST PART OF A BIG BOOK!

In 1970, Sammy Davis, Jr. invited Las Vegas showgirl Kathy McKee to join his nightclub act. Other acts soon followed...

AFTER about six months, they became lovers. After that, he dropped the dancers from his act, but McKee stayed on, as mistress of ceremonies.

Between gigs, Sammy was with his wife and McKee could do as she wished. But on the road, they were inseparable. "I always had my own hotel room," she explained, "but I would only go to it early in the morning, after Sammy and I had had sex."

Perhaps because of the differences in their heights — McKee was 7 inches taller — Sammy preferred oral relations with the showgirl to intercourse. "Getting three or four blowjobs a day from me was routine. I think if he hadn't had other demands on his schedule, he would have asked for twice as many. In hotel rooms, in dressing rooms, in movie theaters, aboard airplanes, it didn't matter. If I was willing he was ready."

The affair ended when Sammy became interested in Satanism.

Sammy used McKee to exercise his fascination with lesbian encounters and group sex, encouraging her to submit to the advances of an attractive blonde woman, a former showgirl, then he joined them for a threesome. Several such encounters ensued, in Los Angeles and elsewhere. But, finally, they ceased, because, as McKee put it, "He could tell that my heart wasn't in it."

The affair came to an end when Sammy became interested in Satanism. "Lovemaking became a ritual tied into the worship of the occult in ways I didn't want to understand," McKee wrote.

When he began watching X-rated movies with a sado-masochistic bent, she fled back to Los Angeles. "Sammy and I stayed in touch, and I should've known his fascination with devil worship was simply a phase he outgrew. Our friendship resumed, though we saw each other less frequently."

Excerpted from *Gonna Do Great Things: The Life of Sammy Davis, Jr.*, © 2003 by Gary Fishgall. Reprinted by permission from Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

Blender Approved

The best books of the last three months



KEITH RICHARDS: THE BIOGRAPHY

By Victor Bockris

DA CAPO PRESS, \$18

The truth behind the Myth of Keef.



ME AND BOBBY D.: A MEMOIR

By Steve Karmen

HAL LEONARD, \$27

A tart snapshot of '50s pop life.



Tommy Lee plays Ron Jeremy's intestines. Realistic, huh?

STAR WARS

Here's your chance to give Carrot Top the bludgeoning he deserves — without going to jail! By Alex Porter

CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

GOTHAM GAMES — GAMECUBE, PS2, XBOX, PC

☆☆☆

➤➤ THE ONLY THING more fascinating than watching celebrities self-destruct is watching them mutilate each other in bloody combat. That was the thinking behind the hit MTV show *Celebrity Deathmatch*, which enjoyed a three-year run before eyeballs pulled away to watch real-life train wrecks Anna Nicole Smith and the Osbournes instead. Now this resurrection of the title puts fans in control of the ultraviolent star wars.

Up to four players pick from a roster of mostly B-listers and a couple of outright

nobodies (sorry, Cindy Margolis and "Jamaican" TV psychic Miss Cleo). Busta Rhymes, Marilyn Manson and 'N Sync appear in the game as well, with bad voice acting performed by sound-alikes.

Each star is armed with a set of unique moves: Anna Nicole bludgeons with a turkey leg and summons a poodle to hump her rival's leg. Carrot Top deploys — wait for it — a giant carrot, and Ron Jeremy jabs 'em with — run from it — a huge erection.

Given that there's a limit to how much joy you can milk from, say, Shannon Doherty boiling Mr. T in a cauldron, a create-a-celeb laboratory lets you build your own fighter. Alas, missing are options to endow your Frankenstar with a Vicodin habit, plastic-surgery bills, and embezzling manager.

DEAD FAMOUS

These celebs killed people — for real!

DON KING

Having first killed a robber in 1954, King, in 1966, stomps to death on the streets of Cleveland a man who owes him money. The future boxing impresario serves four years for manslaughter and is later pardoned.



MATTHEW BRODERICK

In Northern Ireland in 1987, the impish star of *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* drives on the wrong side of the road and front-ends another car, killing two Irish women. He is fined \$175 for "reckless driving."



LAURA BUSH

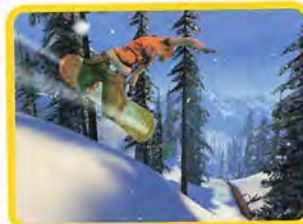
As a 17-year-old high-school student, the future First Lady drives her Chevrolet through a stop sign at an intersection in Midland, Texas, destroying her friend's Corvair and breaking his neck. She is never charged.



DDRMAX 2: DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

KONAMI — PS2

This game has as much to do with "revolution" as the Fox News Channel does with news. But you'll be too busy being a dancing fool to give a damn. Scrolling arrows on your screen tell you where and when to jump on the touch-sensitive dance pad. The 65 songs aren't exactly cutting-edge, but as a party game and coordination-straining warm-up for a sadistic state trooper's DUI test, this game has no peer. ☆☆☆



SSX 3

EA BIG — GAMECUBE, PS2, XBOX

The makers of this snowboarding smash have outdone themselves. Completely revamped, this version gives gamers one mammoth mountain for their playground. Free-ride down the slopes or compete in racing and tricky challenges while tuned to a clubby soundtrack featuring Fischerspooner, the X-ecutioners, Felix da Housecat and the Chemical Brothers. The result? A joyous faceful of the world's second-most addictive white powder. ☆☆☆☆



NBA LIVE 2004

EA SPORTS — GAMECUBE, PC, PS2, XBOX

It's hoops season again, so expect a pro baller to release a lousy rap record and a bunch of rappers to lend basketball-theme tracks to NBA Live. This year, Mobb Deep, Jermaine Dupri and Lil' Flip all cut exclusive tracks you can listen to while you take it to the rim. Play as any NBA team plus old-school legends, each detailed right down to his tattoos and play style. Build a dynasty or jump in for a quick, stylishly presented single game. *Holla!* ☆☆☆☆



VOODOO VINCE

MICROSOFT — XBOX

Most games require you to inflict grievous bodily harm on others, but this is probably the first one where the goal is to kill *yourself*. As Vince, a burlap dolly brought to life by a voodoo priestess, players use their masochistic skills to thwart evil. Trek through New Orleans jumping into whirling blenders, standing beneath falling safes and lighting yourself on fire to put the hurt on nefarious gingerbread men and drunken, anthropomorphic gas pumps. ☆☆☆

Blender Approved

The best games of the last three months



KARAOKE REVOLUTION

KONAMI — PS2

Belt out hit songs as an onscreen meter assesses your ability to stay on key. Dignity sold separately.



SILENT HILL 3

KONAMI — PS2

Mommy! Explore the nightmarish shopping mall (and other horrifying locales) as vulnerable teen Heather.

Certain death at your
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 o'clock



Suggestive Themes
Violence



fasa studio

Microsoft
game studios



Buckle up because *Crimson Skies*® is a deadly ride. Play single player as an air pirate at the helm of a tricked-out 1930s warplane. Because you're fueled by revenge, anyone foolish enough to enter your airspace is an enemy. Play on *Xbox Live*™ to pick a dogfight with up to 15 friends and strangers. Just remember, as you enjoy sending opponents into a fiery death spiral, someone probably has you in their crosshairs. Good luck, you are cleared to rule the skies.



it's good to play together

xbox.com/crimsonskies

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WIN THIS BOSE HOME SYSTEM!

Send your completed puzzle to
Blender Puzzle Contest,
1040 Avenue of the Americas,
22nd floor, New York, New York 10018.

» SWEETEE! Win this Bose 3-2-1 GS DVD home entertainment system worth \$1,300! With this setup, you can play DVDs, CD-Rs, CD-RWs and MP3 CDs, and get true surround sound from only two visible speakers! Just solve this puzzle, read the official rules at blender.com, cut out your completed version and send it to the address at the left. Make sure we get your answer and contact info by November 11, 2003. We'll pick a winner at random and post the winner's name at blender.com/crossword. Whoopee!

PENCIL ME IN!

Hey, it's *Blender's* crossword! Starring 15 Across! BY BRENDAN QUIGLEY

ACROSS

- 1 Gay/straight duo who got you to move your feet (two words)
- 6 Head 10,000 Maniac Merchant
- 7 Psychedelic classic-rock act in a white room with black curtains
- 9 Emo punks with the album *In Reverie* (three words)
- 11 Dashboard-confessing Chris
- 13 Jigga's *Bad Boys II* hit, or what you might sing if you don't know the lyrics (three words)
- 14 Chanteuse who is "so gone"
- 15 Napster fighter/Metallica singer James
- 17 Bearded Southern roots-rockers with the album *Youth & Young Manhood* (three words)
- 20 He had a bitches brew
- 22 R.E.M.'s album with "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?"
- 23 He once was runnin' with the devil (three words)

DOWN

- 1 Lollapalooza cornerstone band, for short
- 2 Aaliyah's "___ 4 U" (two words)
- 3 "___ came in through the bathroom window" (Beatles lyric)
- 4 U2's singular ballad
- 5 Clay Aiken's *American Idol* rival
- 7 Pearl Jam's album *No* ___
- 8 Homemade favorite-song compilation you might record for your friends (two words)
- 10 Indian drum featured on Panjabi MC's "Beware the Boys"
- 11 Fannypack's, er, tight hit
- 12 The Rolling Stones' rhythm guitarist (two words)
- 13 Avril Lavigne's debut LP (two words)
- 16 They need you tonight
- 18 Beck was one back in 1994
- 19 Come away with singer-songwriter Jones
- 21 Ashanti's mentor ___ Gotti
- 22 Sporty and Scary Spice's real first name



15 Across



POP HISTORY! GUNS N' ROSES' LEAD SINGER, AXL ROSE, IS RECALLED

WRITTEN BY CLARK COLLIS. ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN JAY



↑ Fed up with Axl Rose's increasingly erratic behavior, the rest of Guns N' Roses invoke their right to recall him.



↑ The ensuing election produced a bizarre array of candidates.



↑ Even so, the eventual winner came as something of a surprise.

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IT'S WHAT
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MADE FOR!

➔ He's the furry son of a bitch who rumbled with Eminem at last year's VMAs, has the hots for Lassie and enjoys a nice cigar — up his butt. Which only scratches the surface when pondering the question...

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

WHO DOES TRIUMPH THE INSULT COMIC DOG THINK HE IS?

Why did you draw a picture of yourself pooping on a copy of *Blender*?

I realize that it's redundant, like pooping on poop. But it symbolizes other things, too.

For instance?

Like, that most guys read *Blender* only when they're taking a shit.

How would you characterize your taste in sex?

I've been around, so I like to kink it up at this point. Right now, I'm into this crazy shit called "missionary."

What does your mother call you?

"Meal ticket." *I kid.* I've always kidded my mom. Even as a pup, I used to ride her nipples something good: "You call that milk? Why don't you just give me a lemon to suck on?"

Does water taste different straight out of the toilet?

It depends on whose toilet. I find that Courtney Love's is a little more tangy than most. She really should lay off the drugs.

What is your astrological sign, and what does it say about you?

I don't know, but the fact that you're asking me about my sign says that you're queer.

Describe yourself physically.

I'm part Yugoslavian mountain hound, part toy Rottweiler. But with enough licking, I become part Great Dane, if you get my drift.

If you were a woman, who would you want to be?

I'd want to be J.Lo — but I'd want to retain my canine flexibility, so I could sniff my own ass.

What's your favorite curse word? And please use it in a sentence.

What the fuck kind of bullshit first-year-journalism question is that, you cocksucker? Uh... it's in that sentence. Take your pick.

Which do you prefer: heel, roll over or play dead?

I'm not real crazy about "roll over." The last time I did that, I cut my nut sack on a sprinkler head.

Who's a hotter piece: Lassie or Snoopy?

Snoopy's a dude, so I'm out of that one. But the thing about Lassie is that she's really stuck-up. She saves a couple kittens from a burning barn, and suddenly her poop doesn't stink.

Whose dressing room backstage did you hang out in during the 2002 Video Music Awards?

I made sure to leave something in Puffy's dressing room, because I know how much he likes samples.

What's your take on pornography?

Why not? How else is a dog ever going to get to fuck a Latina?

What song brings you to tears?

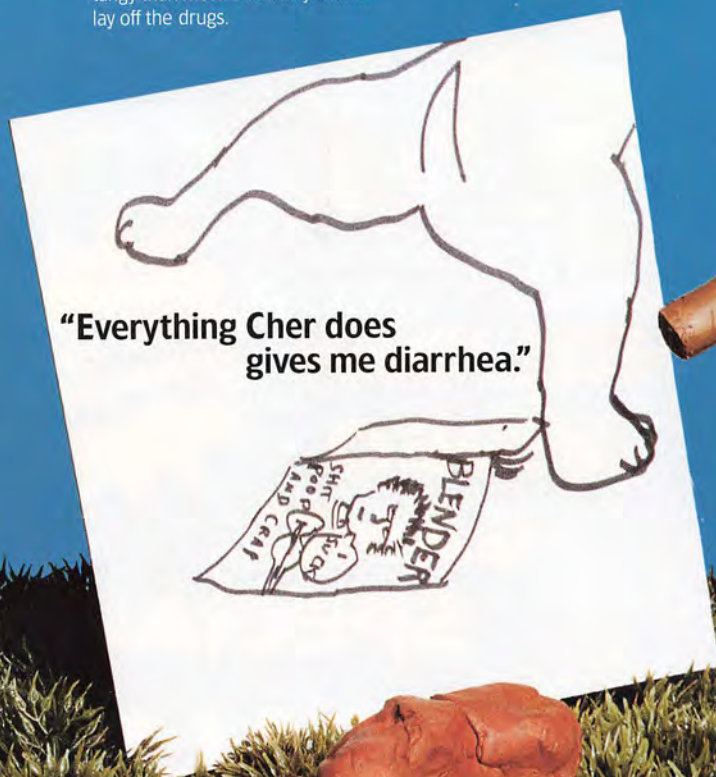
Does a cold sweat count? Because that's what Clay Aiken's music does to me. And everything Cher does gives me diarrhea.

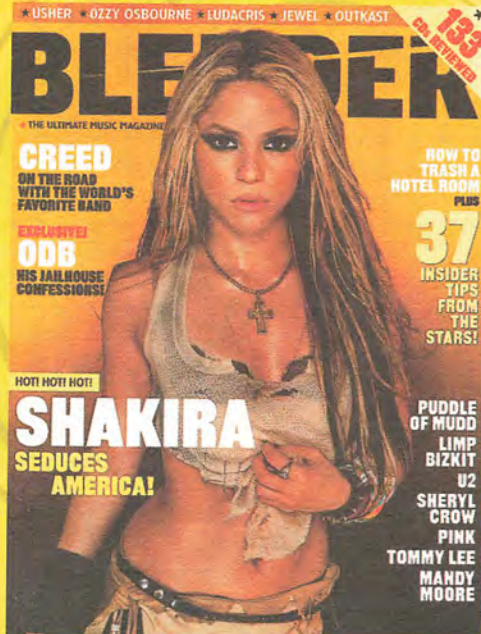
What are your vices?

Occasionally, I like a good cigar — stuffed up my ass.

Can you teach us how to lick ourselves?

That would take time, and by the time you learn, your poop-stinking magazine will have folded. I won't make that mistake again. I tried to teach *Mademoiselle* how to lick themselves, and it broke my heart. *I kid.* You can start by licking me. [BLENDER]





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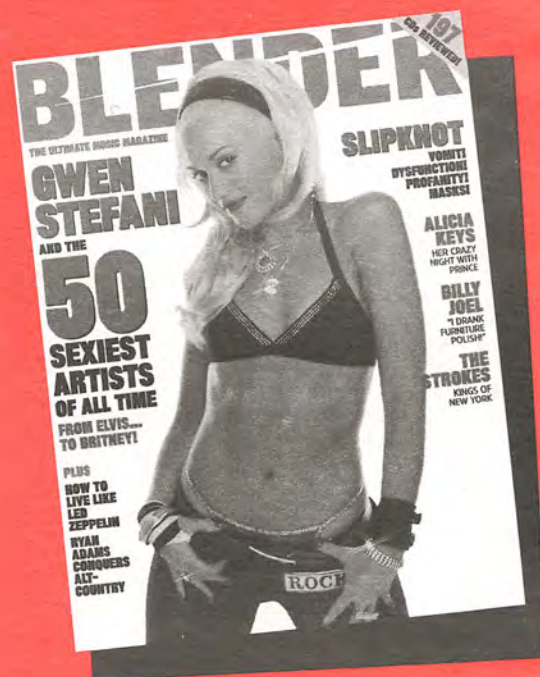
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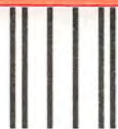
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